

U.S. warns Serbia on Kosovo

WASHINGTON (R) — The United States Monday warned Serbia against further destabilising acts in the province of Kosovo and left open the possibility it would take unilateral military action to halt the spread of fighting. State Department spokesman Joe Snyder refused to confirm a New York Times report that President George Bush had warned Serbian leaders the United States is prepared to use military force if the Balkan province spreads to Kosovo, a Serbian province inhabited mostly by ethnic Albanians. But Mr. Snyder told reporters: "We're deeply concerned about the situation in Kosovo. We have discussed this with other governments, and our concerns are widely shared in the international community. We're watching and will continue to watch Serbian actions in Kosovo carefully. There should be no doubt that the United States would take very seriously destabilising acts by Serbia in Kosovo," he said. Mr. Snyder, citing a NATO communiqué issued on Dec. 17 which voiced concern about a spillover of the Bosnia civil war, urged all parties to act with restraint and begin serious negotiations on the restoration of autonomy to Kosovo.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جورديان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر بالإنجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية، الرأى

Arafat to meet U.N. chief in Geneva

GENEVA (R) — Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) leader Yasser Arafat will meet U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali in Geneva Wednesday to plead the case of 415 Palestinians expelled by Israel, a Palestinian spokesman said Monday. "Arafat is coming to meet Boutros-Ghali on Wednesday," said Nabil Ramlawi, head of the PLO's observer mission to the United Nations in Geneva. "He will discuss the situation in general and in particular the issue of the evictees." Mr. Arafat will discuss the possibility of the U.N. Security Council pressuring Israel to implement a resolution calling for the immediate return of the evictees. Mr. Ramlawi said: "The Security Council can do many things, including the use of Chapter Seven of the U.N. Charter to put pressure on Israel to implement its resolution," he told Reuters. Mr. Ramlawi spoke after delivering an oral message from Mr. Arafat to Dr. Ghali about the Palestinians expelled 10 days ago and trapped in southern Lebanon. Dr. Ghali has been visiting the U.N. European headquarters since the weekend for talks on a variety of issues until Jan. 2. It will be his first meeting with the head of the PLO since taking up his post as secretary-general nearly a year ago, Mr. Ramlawi said.

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China: Iraqi territory should be respected

BEIJING (R) — China said Monday Iraq's territory should be respected and it did not want the situation in the Gulf inflamed by shooting down of an Iraqi plane by a U.S. fighter. "The Chinese government... does not want to see the situation in the Gulf region become tense and complicated once again," a Foreign Ministry spokesman said. He said the U.S. government's remarks in answer to a request for comment on the downing of an Iraqi plane by a U.S. fighter in a zone over southern Iraq were "inappropriate".

Israeli crown prince and Saudi visit

ABU DHABI (R) — Qatar's Crown Prince Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani Monday ended a visit to Saudi Arabia where he held talks with King Fahd on a new peace deal. The Qatari news agency said Sheikh Hamad, who is defence minister, flew from Riyadh Sunday, a week after he had signed a deal with Saudi Arabia to end a three-month-long border dispute. The deal, which was signed in Riyadh, ended a dispute between the two countries over a 30-kilometre strip of land along the border. The deal was signed after a series of talks between the two countries. The deal was signed after a series of talks between the two countries.

Assembly gets today

ABU DHABI (AP) — A national assembly of respected tribal leaders and scholars will meet this week in Abu Dhabi to discuss the next steps in the peace process. A spokesman said Monday, a decision-making session of the assembly is due to convene today morning at an undisclosed location, said spokesman Abdullah Enad, Representative of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference will attend the assembly as observers, he said. The government will spend the next 18 months drafting a constitution for the Islamic state and setting for the first nationwide elections since the 1978 communal election.

Mitterrand leaves Turkey

ANBUL (R) — French President Francois Mitterrand left Turkey Monday after a five-day visit. He was accompanied by his wife Danielle. Mitterrand's visit to Turkey was part of a tour of the Middle East. He was accompanied by his wife Danielle. Mitterrand's visit to Turkey was part of a tour of the Middle East.

Wait to discuss 'talking' with league

WAIT (R) — A Kuwaiti official will fly to Cyprus Tuesday to meet Arab League envoy Al Fathi Idris, who has been in Cyprus to discuss the issue of the missing since the Gulf war. KUNA news agency said Monday, Duaj Al Anzi, a senior official of the Kuwaiti government, will fly to Cyprus Tuesday to meet Arab League envoy Al Fathi Idris, who has been in Cyprus to discuss the issue of the missing since the Gulf war.

Clinton going into isolation

ATTLE ROCK, Ark. (AP) — President-elect Bill Clinton, his selection process was flying Monday to a quiet retreat on the South Carolina coast for a quiet week of reflection and with family and political associates. Clinton, his wife Hillary and daughter Chelsea planned to take a "rejuvenation weekend," a privately sponsored retreat on a small island off the South Carolina coast where Clinton and his family have a home.

Palestinians urge U.N. envoy to insist Israel allow evictees' return

Hariri bans Jonah from visiting expelled Palestinians through Lebanese territory

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Palestinian leaders urged a U.N. envoy on Monday to insist on the immediate repatriation of 415 Palestinians expelled by Israel, saying they were suffering in "tragic circumstances" in Lebanon.

The plea to U.N. Under-Secretary-General James Jonah came in a meeting with 10 Palestinians in Arab East Jerusalem. Meanwhile, Lebanon barred Mr. Jonah from passing through its territory to visit the 415 Palestinians trapped in South Lebanon.

Asked if the government would allow Mr. Jonah to reach the camp through its territory, Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri told Reuters in Beirut: "He has to go through Israeli territory."

Israel told Mr. Jonah on Sunday it would not back down on the mass expulsions. He was sent to investigate the expulsions, condemned by the U.N. Security Council which demand the safe return of the evictees.

Asked if troops at the last Lebanese checkpoint before the camp would stop Mr. Jonah visiting the evictees, Mr. Hariri said: "Don't think he will go if he does not have our authority and we won't give him our authority. I will not allow him in."

Mr. Hariri said the same applied to Bernard Kouchner, French minister for humanitarian affairs, and a French medical team who had been expected to fly to Beirut to visit the Palestinians.

"We don't see any reason why we have to change our position," Mr. Hariri added. Lebanon holds the evictees are Israel's responsibility and it must be forced to take them back.

Israel and Lebanon are barring all aid agencies from taking supplies to the Palestinians.

Asked if he would allow sick and wounded from the camp to return to a hospital in Lebanese government-controlled territory, Mr. Hariri said: "No. Let them take them to Marjayoun."

Marjayoun is a town inside Israel's self-declared "security zone" in South Lebanon. Lebanese authorities ordered the sick and wounded evictees to return to their makeshift camp last Friday.

"We see the Lebanese government is acting legally," said Dr. Abdul Aziz Al Rantisi, a leader of the evictees. He added the Security Council should force Israel to allow Mr. Jonah to the camp.

Before the Lebanese ban was announced, the evictees said they were waiting impatiently to show the envoy their suffering.

The Israeli army said it was reviewing the files of the evictees, and news reports said as many as 400 were waiting to be allowed to return.

(Continued on page 5)

Iraq blames Bush for downing of warplane and vows revenge

BAGHDAD (R) — (Agencies) — Baghdad vowed Monday to avenge the first downing of an Iraqi plane in the allied exclusion zone in southern Iraq and said it would turn its wrath on outgoing U.S. President George Bush.

A U.S. F-16 fighter shot down an Iraqi plane in southern Iraq Sunday, the first such incident since the allies began enforcing the exclusion zone over much of Iraq's Shiite south in August.

Official newspapers published front-page editorials on Monday calling the incident "cowardly act" perpetrated by Mr. Bush as he was leaving the White House to "the dustbin of history."

"Our great people... know very well how to turn their violent wrath over Bush's new aggression into a revolution against this dirty criminal and his vicious attempts to encroach on Iraq's sovereignty," the government daily Al Jumhuriyah said.

"The criminal Bush commits yet another aggression against Iraq. This time we cannot remain silent," it said.

Mr. Bush and President-elect Bill Clinton on Sunday warned Iraq it must comply with sanctions on its activities. Mr. Bush called the incursion into the "no-fly" zone "a big mistake" for Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein.

The United States, Britain and France guard two exclusion zones, one below the 32nd Parallel to prevent Iraqi planes and helicopter gunships attacking disident Shiites in the southern marshlands, and the second in the north above the 36th Parallel to protect the Kurds.

Iraq Sunday said the plane was on a routine flight within its borders. It promised to respond "in the suitable manner and at the appropriate time."

The Pentagon said the plane was issued a verbal warning, and that U.S. fighters attacked after it and another Iraqi plane "turned to confront the U.S. aircraft."

But the U.S. pilots who shot down the Iraqi fighter may have mistaken a standard manoeuvre for aggressive action, the editor of Jane's defence weekly said.

Editor Paul Beaver also said that if the Iraqi aircraft had locked weapons and radar systems on north above the 36th Parallel to protect the Kurds.

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Israeli soldier wounded in Gaza ambush

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Unknown assailants fired at an army jeep patrolling in the occupied Gaza Strip Monday, and a soldier was lightly wounded, the army said.

Soldiers in the jeep returned fire and searched the area near the town of Khan Yunis in the southern coastal strip, the army said.

It was the first time in three weeks that a soldier was hurt in a shooting ambush in Gaza.

On Dec. 7, three Israeli soldiers were killed by Palestinian assailants, and the Muslim fundamentalist group Hamas claimed responsibility.

The killings of the three soldiers and three more Israeli troops in the following days led to Israel's decision to expel 415 Palestinians to Lebanon.

On Sunday troops shot and wounded 15 Palestinians in clashes in the Gaza Strip with demonstrators protesting the expulsion of the Palestinians.

Fourteen Palestinians were wounded in Jabalya refugee camp and one in Gaza City, the sources said.

Israeli troops have killed 12 Palestinians and wounded scores of others since the expulsion.

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Israel told Mr. Jonah on Sunday it would not back down on the mass expulsions. He was sent to investigate the expulsions, condemned by the U.N. Security Council which demand the safe return of the evictees.

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"We don't see any reason why we have to change our position," Mr. Hariri added. Lebanon holds the evictees are Israel's responsibility and it must be forced to take them back.

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"We see the Lebanese government is acting legally," said Dr. Abdul Aziz Al Rantisi, a leader of the evictees. He added the Security Council should force Israel to allow Mr. Jonah to the camp.



Iraqis, along with Palestinians and other Arabs, demonstrate in front of the U.N. building in Baghdad against Israel's expulsion of 415 Palestinians (AFP photo)

U.S. is 'encouraged' by arms talks with Russians

GENEVA (AP) — Last-chance talks to wrap up a nuclear missile reduction treaty before President George Bush leaves office opened Monday with Russian Foreign Minister Andrei V. Kozyrev offering to bet a bottle of whiskey on a successful outcome and the U.S. side "encouraged by the way things are going."

Even before the first session was held at the Russian mission, Secretary of State Lawrence S. Eagleburger had rated the chances at better than 50-50, but stubborn technical problems remained.

And afterward, State Department spokesman Richard A. Boucher told reporters: "We are encouraged by the way things are going. I think we are making progress."

Mr. Boucher said Mr. Eagleburger and Mr. Kozyrev would have dinner together and then meet again Tuesday.

Asked if he expected an agreement to be a bottle of whiskey, Mr. Kozyrev said: "I am ready to bet a bottle of whiskey. We will do such work here to make it possible for our presidents to have the right decision after the negotiations here."

The foreign minister quickly amended his remark to say: "Positive decision."

The two sides met for more than three hours at the Russian mission, but made no statement afterwards as they went to lunch. Mr. Kozyrev, however, flashed the thumbs-up sign.

Mr. Eagleburger avoided any last-minute prediction of his own. He hopes an agreement will set the stage for a summit signing before Mr. Bush leaves office Jan. 20.

Russian President Boris Yeltsin has twice in the last three weeks predicted he and Mr. Bush will meet after New Year's. Mr. Bush wants any such summit to include a treaty signing.

Joining Mr. Kozyrev at the table for the first time was Russian Defence Minister Pavel Grachev, an indication Moscow is ready to make a deal.

"I can't believe at this stage it will take more than 24 hours to get it all settled if we are going to get it all settled at all," Mr. Eagleburger said Sunday on his flight from Washington.

League demands reversal of expulsions

CAIRO (R) — Egypt and the Arab League said Monday Israel should immediately and unconditionally reverse its expulsion of 415 Palestinians.

Arab League Secretary General Esmat Abdul Meguid told a seminar the expulsions were criminal and inhumane and a "dangerous setback" to the Middle East peace process.

"We ask the international community not to stand idle towards this crime which is infringing the rights of Palestinian human beings," he said.

Prime Minister Atef Sedki told parliament in a year-end policy statement that Egypt was pursuing contacts with Israeli leaders to end the crisis which threatened to kill the 14-month-old Middle East peace talks.

"We informed the Israelis of the dangerous repercussions of such illegal action on the peace process... that they need to reverse their decision and return home all the Palestinian evictees immediately and unconditionally as stipulated by the (U.N.) Security Council," Mr. Sedki said.

He said Egypt had contacted the sponsors of the peace talks, the United States, Russia, and the United Nations, and asked them "to work on a quick implementation of Security Council resolutions by putting a mechanism and a deadline to guarantee the return of the evictees to their land and home."

Egyptian newspapers were increasingly critical of Israel. "Israel through its immoral behaviour is challenging and scorning international resolutions," said a daily newspaper.

(Continued on page 3)

Tehran paper wants Iran to revive claim to Bahrain

TEHRAN (R) — Radical Iranian newspapers, angered by Gulf Arab claims to three disputed islands, are biting back with demands that Tehran revive its claim to Bahrain and consider improving ties with Iraq.

President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani and senior officials strongly condemned a statement last week by leaders of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) backing the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in its dispute with Iran over the Gulf islands.

The newspapers Salam and Jomhuri Eslami demanded that Tehran go further than restating its resolve to defend its sovereignty over the islands of Abu Musa, Greater Tunb and Lesser Tunb.

"It is not very clear why the sheikh of Bahrain has joined the others," Jomhuri Eslami said. The GCC groups Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

If historical records are to be the criterion, the sheikh of Bahrain should go about his own business and the rule of Iranian people in Bahrain, which belonged to Iran until 1970, should be re-established, the paper said.

"It is fitting for the Foreign Ministry to raise the question of Iran's sovereignty over Bahrain... and start a serious and effective drive to end the separation of Bahrain from Iran," it added.

The late Shah of Iran rebuked Iran's claim to Bahrain in 1970, a year before the island became an independent state.

Iranian leaders since the 1979 Islamic revolution have carefully avoided raising the Bahrain issue although it is occasionally brought up in the press during periods of tension with Arab states across the Gulf.

Salam newspaper said the GCC stand showed that the policy of appeasing pro-Western Gulf Arab rulers had backfired.

"No matter how much you smile at sheikhs on the southern coast of the Persian Gulf, it is the United States and the West which speak the last word," it said.

"They (the sheikhs) are nobody," Salam said, adding that Iran should revise its policy towards its neighbours, especially its former war enemy Iraq.

(Continued on page 5)

Despite hardline criticism, Palestinian cold war appears nearing an end

By Mariam M. Shahin
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Despite the disappointment voiced by the hardline groups, the cold war that raged in Palestinian political circles since the Middle East peace process began in Madrid appears to be coming to an end with a meeting attended by all Palestinian factions in Tunis last week.

For the first time since October 1991, all factions of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and the major non-PLO group, the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas), came together at the PLO headquarters in the Tunisian capital to discuss Israel's expulsion of 415 Palestinians to Lebanon on Dec. 17.

But what was actually debated was the fate of the Palestinian struggle and unity of the Palestinian ranks.

The meeting did not produce

a Palestinian withdrawal from the Arab-Israeli peace talks as demanded by the hardline groups. A PLO statement issued late Sunday acknowledged that there "opinions" within the meeting on the issues of the peace talks.

There was agreement on the immediate issue of the expelled Palestinians now stranded in South Lebanon. The PLO statement said the evictees should "stay put until their direct return to their homeland."

Not all groups were happy with the outcome of the meeting.

Hamas and the hardline wing of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) expressed disappointment.

"With profound regret, the results of the meeting were not at the level of the challenges

we are confronting... the correct response of the Palestinian leadership should have been withdrawal from the (peace) talks," Abdul Rahim Mallouh, PFLP representative on the PLO Executive Committee, said in Tunis.

The Damascus-based DFLP accused the PLO leadership of calling for a meeting of Palestinian factions only to use it as a cover for its policy of continuing peace talks with Israel.

"Most of the forces who participated in the meetings demanded withdrawal from the negotiations until Israel returned the Palestinian evictees and respected international legality," said Tayseer Khalid, the DFLP representative in the PLO Executive Committee.

Hamas spokesman Mohammad Nazzari told a news conference before leaving Tunis that: "Agreement on the (evictees) was total, but the disagreement on the peace process was big."

In spite of the criticism and disappointment voiced by the hardline groups over the Tunis meeting's failure to produce a decision to withdraw Palestinian negotiators from the peace talks, the very fact that the Palestinian groups sat down together and discussed some of the thorniest problems was in itself a breakthrough, observers say.

With the exception of the ailing leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), George Habash, and the imprisoned wheel-chair confined Sheikh Ahmad Yassin of Hamas, all main Palestinian leaders were there talking together under one roof in Tunis.

For months PLO leaders in Tunis have been voicing their desire to resume a dialogue with the anti-peace talks coalition which groups 10 parties. Known as the Damascus Ten, the group made an official

alliance in September of this year.

Fateh officials in Tunis and Amman complained about the "hard-headed" approach of PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat in particular.

"He wants the opposition under his hood without agreeing to any concessions," said Ahmad Al Jamal of the hardline wing of the DFLP.

But the expulsion of the 415 Palestinians came as "the best excuse to talk again," according to PLO officials in Tunis.

Hamas, which insisted on an official invitation from the PLO, went as soon as the invitation arrived. Nayef Hawatmeh, leader of the Damascus-based DFLP also went to Tunis for the emergency meeting of Palestinian leaders.

"These meetings were of utmost significance simply because they re-cemented Palestinian ranks in the head-

quarters of the PLO," the head of the PLO information office in Tunis, Jamil Al Hilal, told the Jordan Times.

While the talks revolved almost entirely on the fate of those expelled, Mr. Hilal said, the "doors were open for further dialogue."

"Effectively the stone wall of opposition emanating from Damascus has been torn down as a result of the meeting this week," he added.

Hamas signed a joint communiqué with the PLO and this communiqué was a sign that the cold war as such has ended," saw one Tunis-based PLO official.

While a late November meeting of PLO officials was boycotted by both the hardline wing of the DFLP and PFLP, Tunis-based PLO officials claim that the two groups "were not really boycotting the PLO as such."

With Hamas talking to Mr.

Neither the PLO nor Hamas have been able to confirm the exact number of PNC seats that the two sides are expected to negotiate at the Khartoum meeting.

However, at least two sources confirmed that Hamas would be offered in the "vicinity of 20 seats" of those that represent the Palestinians in the diaspora, or 20 out of some 180 to 200 seats.

Hamas's representation among the 180 "phantom" (Continued on page 5)

Weinberger says Walsh tried to coerce testimony against Reagan

WASHINGTON (AP) — Caspar Weinberger, the burden of his criminal defence lifted by President George Bush's Christmas Eve pardon, charged Sunday that the Iran-contra special prosecutor tried to "coerce false testimony" from him implicating Ronald Reagan.

Mr. Weinberger said special counsel Lawrence Walsh, who has pursued the case for six years, brought charges against him only after Mr. Weinberger had refused to cooperate in the prosecution of higher ups in the Iran-contra scandal.

"Cooperation meant giving them the testimony that they wanted that would enable them to implicate President Reagan," Mr. Weinberger said, referring to Mr. Walsh and his assistants.

"When they couldn't get that, then they went after me with five felony counts, all of which they would have been perfectly willing to drop if I had, quote, 'cooperated' with them. And I wasn't going to cooperate with them," he said.

Mr. Weinberger commented on ABC-TV's "This Week with David Brinkley" programme.

The secretary of defence in Reagan's administration, continuing a bitter war of words with Mr. Walsh, accused the prosecutor of pursuing a political agenda against the former president. He said the prosecutors offered to allow him to plead guilty to one misdemeanor of withholding information from Congress.

"Yes, he was trying to coerce false testimony," Mr. Weinberger said.

Mr. Walsh's spokeswoman, Mary Belcher, disputed Mr. Weinberger's assertion.

"Walsh did not ask Caspar Weinberger to incriminate anyone," Ms. Belcher said in a tele-

phone interview. "False testimony is the last thing a prosecutor wants. All he asked Weinberger for was the truth."

In an angry response to the pardon of Mr. Weinberger and other figures in the arms-for-hostages deal with Iran, Mr. Walsh's assistant, James J. Brosnahan, said Saturday that Mr. Bush may have granted pardons to avoid being a witness at Mr. Weinberger's trial.

Mr. Bush, vacationing in Texas, declined to answer reporters' questions on the Iran-contra affair Sunday.

Mr. Weinberger disputed the suggestion that Mr. Bush pardoned him to cover his own tracks. He acknowledged his notes indicate Mr. Bush favoured an exchange of 4,000 Taw missiles for hostages during a Jan. 7, meeting, but said the issue was not arms-for-hostages because Mr. Reagan later asserted part of his motive was to improve relations with Iran.

"The vice-president at that time attended some of the meetings. He knew these discussions were going on. He said so. But, again, whether or not it was arms for hostages was basically a matter of opinion," Mr. Weinberger said. "The president of the United States then, President Reagan, insisted that he didn't think it was."

Mr. Weinberger acknowledged "misstatements and errors" in his testimony to Congress but denied any criminality.

"I did not lie to Congress," Mr. Weinberger said. "A lie requires some kind of criminal intent to deceive, and that was never present in anything I've said."

Meanwhile, a spokesman for House Speaker Thomas Foley, (Democrat-Washington), said

Mr. Foley had spoken with a White House official several weeks ago about a possible pardon of Mr. Weinberger.

Jeffrey R. Biggs, Mr. Foley's press secretary, said Mr. Foley "indicated it was purely within the president's prerogative." He said the speaker said he "didn't have a recommendation to make, but that ultimately if Mr. Weinberger was pardoned he wouldn't criticise it."

Mr. Biggs said he was not sure which White House official spoke with Mr. Foley, but said it was not Mr. Bush himself. Mr. Biggs said there was never any mention that pardons for anyone other than Mr. Weinberger were being considered.

"He was not advised at any time of the president's actual decision and was taken totally by surprise by the decision to pardon anyone else," Mr. Biggs said in a telephone interview Sunday.

Senator Warren Rudman, who was co-chairman of the Senate committee that investigated Iran-contra, called Mr. Weinberger's pardon "the right thing to do."

Appearing on the ABC programme, Mr. Rudman called Mr. Weinberger "one of the heroes of Iran-contra" for opposing, privately within the Reagan administration, the sale of arms to Iran.

He accused Mr. Walsh of "vindictiveness beyond belief" for indicting Mr. Weinberger over what he said were "very technical matters."

Both Mr. Rudman and Rep. Lee Hamilton, who was chairman of the House Iran-contra committee, called for full disclosure of relevant portions of both Mr. Weinberger's notes and those of Mr. Bush, which Mr. Walsh first learned of this month.



Somali warlords Ali Mahdi Muhammad (right) and General Mohammed Farah Audeh hold hands aloft at a "unity" rally near Mogadishu's "green line" which used to separate their rival fiefdoms until the American-led military intervention in Somalia to help relief efforts in the war-ravaged, famine-struck country (AFP photo)

Somali educated elite scattered; university now a refugee camp

By Denis D. Gray
The Associated Press
MOGADISHU — A hot wind soughs through pillaged, empty classrooms, and goats graze on the campus lawns. Instead of students, there are 22,000 hungry refugees, and teachers are scattered around the world.

This is what is left of the main campus of the National University of Somalia, which once produced the country's best and brightest — the engineers, doctors, teachers now vitally needed to keep the disaster-plagued country from going under.

Civil war has left Somalia's elite dispersed, jobless or dead. The university, like virtually every other institution, has been closed for the past two years.

"We will have to start from zero," said Osman Mohammad Mahamed, an agriculture school graduate, as he picked his way through smashed laboratories, libraries without books and classrooms where even the window panes had been pried out and hauled away as booty.

With U.S.-led troops now providing some security and with more international aid on its way, the rebuilding of Somalia has entered its first stages.

But without Somali skill and brainpower, the massive task of reconstruction is even more daunting.

By United Nations estimates, one of every six Somalis is a refugee. More than half a million live in Ethiopia, 300,000 in Kenya, 100,000 in European countries, 65,000 in Yemen and 15,000 in Djibouti. Smaller Somali communities can be found in many other countries.

Most are poor farmers expected to return once they can

plant their fields without fear of looting and violence.

A large-scale return of intellectuals, however, many of them relatively well-off abroad, is less certain.

"If you have real security they will come back. But it will take much more than what the Americans are arranging now," says Seifullah Milas, a Mozambican sociologist working in Mogadishu for the United Nations.

"Most of the best ones have gone. There are some who couldn't make it out and a very, very few stayed by choice," he said.

One barometer of the mood can be found at utanga, a Somali refugee camp in Kenya dubbed the "Camp of Intellectuals" because of its large number of professionals and government officials — some of whom arrived with servants in tow.

Many of the camp's 31,400 residents still want to be resettled elsewhere, with the United States the top choice, according to Panos Moutzias, a spokesman for the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees.

Somalia's educated pool, never large to begin with, has been all but sucked dry. Of the roughly 880 teachers at the university's 11 campuses, two-thirds fled abroad or have vanished, said Ahmad Mumin Warfa, former rector of the university.

Dr. Hawa Abdi, who works at the Lafoote hospital and refugee camp near Mogadishu, knows of only three colleagues who remain of the 100 or so who once worked with her in the medical faculty.

"There are three or four PhDs left in the country — probably three," said Ahmad Mumin, who holds a doctorate in botany from

Sweden and now advises the United Nations on how to resolve the civil conflict.

Although many intellectuals blame ignorant Nomads from "the bush" for destroying Somalia through deeply-rooted clan rivalry, Dr. Ahmad said the elite must share the guilt.

"The intelligentsia claimed to be above the clan and for the country. They cried, 'Somalia, oh Somalia.' But you went to their offices and their watchmen, cooks, assistants and subordinates were all from their own clan," he said.

Some, however, maintain they have dropped clan loyalties, stayed in Somalia by choice and hope to take part in resurrecting it.

One is Mohamad Ali Kaariye, the country's foremost poet and playwright, who lives in an artists' colony that once numbered about 100 and now has half a dozen.

Mr. Kaariye continues to write, and meets each day with friends to discuss how to revive Somalia's shattered culture — including its tradition of oral poetry, which carried lessons of peace. Somalia developed a written language only under ousted Dictator Mohammad Siad Barre, who was deposed two years ago and chased into exile in April.

Since Mr. Siad Barre's ouster, armed clansmen and looters have ruled the streets, and an estimated 350,000 Somalis have died as a result of fighting, drought and famine.

The poet's group meets next to the national museum, its buildings now hollow shells and its treasures stolen or destroyed. A second vital repository of culture, the National Theatre, has been rendered mute by shell fire.

Scowcroft looks for Somalia withdrawal

WASHINGTON (AP) — National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft said Sunday he hopes U.S. troops can begin withdrawing from Somalia before President-elect Bill Clinton takes office Jan. 20.

Mr. Scowcroft said the job of disarming Somalis would be "an open-ended commitment" best left to United Nations peacekeeping forces that remain after the U.S. withdrawal.

Appearing on NBC-TV's "Meet the Press" programme, the national security adviser to President George Bush said the administration's aim was to at least end the buildup of U.S. forces and start their withdrawal before the new Clinton administration begins.

"I hope it will be under way," Mr. Scowcroft said. "In other words, the withdrawal will have begun so that the new administration will be faced with a situation in which the United States is withdrawing its involvement, rather than increasing it."

Mr. Scowcroft said the buildup of U.S. troops "is proceeding very rapidly, very smoothly. We're spreading out now to the distribution centres, and I believe it will not be too long before U.S. contingents can begin to withdraw, first as other foreign forces come in and as the operation turns from a peacekeeping, if you will, into more of a peacekeeping."

Mr. Bush is planning to fly to Somalia on Wednesday to spend new year's with U.S. troops he ordered there in a humanitarian effort to feed the starving people of that lawless country.

American, French and Belgian troops already have secured Mogadishu, Beldi Dogle, Baidoa, Kismayo, Bardera and Hoddu, virtually without a struggle. One American civilian working for the army has died so far, by a mine explosion.

The troops were dispatched after widespread looting made it impossible for international relief

agencies to provide food. An estimated 300,000 Somalis have died of starvation this year, and two million more are threatened.

Appearing separately on Cable News Network (CNN), Lieutenant-General Robert B. Johnston, commander of the U.S. joint task force to Somalia, said he was not operating under a deadline for the withdrawal of troops, but said it was "reasonable to expect that some troops" may be taken out of Somalia in January.

"The numbers, I could not now predict. But I have no, time line. Nobody has put any pressure on me to move troops back in January coincident with the inauguration," Gen. Johnston said.

On the former Yugoslavian republics, Mr. Scowcroft said differences over details of how to enforce the "no-fly" zone over Bosnia are holding up United Nations action. But he said a resolution was possible within days.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Kuwait to ban trade in Iraqi dinar

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait's central bank is to ban trade in Iraqi dinars, an official from the emirate's money exchange said. Issa Bahman said Sunday the ban would be imposed and had warned so they could take action to avoid losses. One trader said five million Iraqi dinars were traded daily in Kuwait. A dinar, officially worth \$3.1 in Iraq, has risen in Kuwait to cents from 4.5 as traders feared supplies, mainly from the Arab Emirates, would dry up if the ban were announced.

Turkey wants to extradite rebel Kurds

ISTANBUL (R) — Turkey will seek to extradite some of Turkish Kurds held in northern Iraq, Turkey's interior said Sunday. The semi-official Anatolia news agency said Interior Minister Ismet Sezgin was saying Turkey would ask for the extradition of those being sought for offences in Turkey. Mr. Sezgin said. The Turkish army supported by Iraqi Kurds, crossed into northern Iraq October to flush out PKK guerrillas who carry out raids from camps in the mountains. Mr. Sezgin said security forces destroyed all PKK camps along the border killed at least 2,000 PKK guerrillas in the fighting. The eight-year campaign for an independent Kurdish state in Turkey has killed at least 5,200 people, more than 2,000 alone.

Foreigners in Iran must undergo AIDS

NICOSIA (AP) — All foreigners who stay in Iran more than 10 months will be required to undergo an AIDS test, the Republic News Agency reported Sunday. It said the announcement was made by Abdul Hamid Emami, secretary of the Committee for the Campaign Against AIDS. The agency gave the number of cases of the fatal disease reported so far.

Libya, Albania sign trade protocol

CAIRO (AP) — Libya and Albania signed an agreement aimed at boosting cooperation between the two countries television reported. The state television said the protocol for cooperation in the economic, technical, scientific, youth and information fields. The protocol was signed by ministers from both sides. Albanian Industry Minister Abd-Xhaxha had talks in Tripoli with Foreign Minister Omar M. Montassir on bilateral issues, the television said in a monitored in London.

Claes supports repatriation of evictees

CAIRO (AP) — Belgian Foreign Minister Willy Claes called for boosting cooperation between the two countries television reported. The state television said the protocol for cooperation in the economic, technical, scientific, youth and information fields. The protocol was signed by ministers from both sides. Albanian Industry Minister Abd-Xhaxha had talks in Tripoli with Foreign Minister Omar M. Montassir on bilateral issues, the television said in a monitored in London.

Iranian trade delegation visits Cairo

CAIRO (R) — An Iranian trade delegation held talks Monday with Egyptian businessmen on ways to boost trade in commerce, business sources said. The 11-man Iranian team Hassan Ghafoori, deputy minister of economy and finance, in Cairo on Sunday at the invitation of Egyptian businessman Ibrahim Kamel. Mr. Kamel's office said the two parties discussing ways of strengthening economic relations. It elaborated. It was the first visit by an Iranian trade delegation to Cairo since the 1979 Islamic revolution when the two states relations. Relations between Cairo and Tehran deteriorated after President Hosni Mubarak accused Iran of Muslim extremist groups seeking to overthrow the Egyptian government and replace it with an Islamic caliphate.

Iran minister visits Turkey, ties improve

NICOSIA (R) — Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Ali Mol-Besharati left for Turkey Monday to "open a new door of Tehran-Ankara relations, Iran's IRNA news agency said. This month Turkey released a ship and its cargo of Bulgarian which was detained since October 1991 when it was sailing the Bosphorus Strait. "Political analysts believe that follow release of the...Cyprus-registered ship 'Cape Maleas', an obstacle on the way to expansion of Iran-Turkey relations removed and the visit will open a new door in bilateral relations," IRNA said. Relations are also troubled by the secularism and the two neighbours' rivalry for influence. Muslim former Soviet republics. Iran is critical of suppression of its separatist Kurds and the Turkish army's forays into northern Iraq in pursuit of Kurdish rebels.

Iranian dissident abducted in Turkey

ISTANBUL (R) — Five unidentified assailants kidnaped Iranian dissident in suburban Istanbul Monday, the semi Anatolia news agency reported. It quoted police sources as Abbas Kholzade, a former officer in the Iranian army and of the Islamic regime in Tehran, was abducted outside the suburb of Erenkoy as he and his wife were returning home. Assailants sprayed chemicals that made them unconscious Kholzade and sped away in a minibus. Police said Kholzade supporter of the late Shah. Many Iranians exiled after Islamic revolution live in Istanbul.

Algeria begins trial of up to 90 Muslim soldiers

ALGIERS (AP) — Police have killed two suspects and rounded up 84 others on sabotage charges, while a military court began trying up to 90 Muslim soldiers accused of plotting against the government.

Nearly one year after cancelling January elections Muslim fundamentalists were able to win, the government continues struggling against violence that has killed more than 250 police and soldiers.

The now-banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) had blamed government mismanagement and corruption for high unemployment in this oil-rich country.

The 84 arrestees were accused of sabotaging electric and telephone lines and torching public buildings, government radio said Sunday night.

They were arrested in the Seuf region, 300 kilometres east of the capital Algiers, and police confiscated pistols, hunting rifles and homemade guns, the radio said.

Several took refuge in a nearby forest, where police killed two and arrested seven, it said.

The trial of Muslim soldiers opened in southwestern Algeria Sunday after being delayed by unruly defendants for a week.

The defendants, who number 60 to 90 according to various reports and include officers and enlisted men, are being tried in a military court in Bechar, 950 kilometres southwest of Algiers.

The defendants face execution if convicted for "conspiracy against the security" according to some, not be further identified.

Tight secrecy has surrounded the trial. The defendants' names

and ranks have not been made public, as well as details of the charges against them.

But the accusations include cooperating with a retired army officer now in hiding, Said Mekhloufi, in running guns to the FIS.

Mr. Mekhloufi is a former editor-in-chief of two FIS newspapers.

The trial was originally scheduled to begin Dec. 20 but was postponed for behaviour that showed "disrespect for the sovereignty of the court" by the defendants, the national news agency APS reported. It did not elaborate.

Sources in Beshar however said the defendants refused to stand when the presiding judge entered the courtroom, and shouted catcalls at him.

Meanwhile, a former pilot for Air Algeria was convicted sentenced to death Sunday for allegedly plotting to contaminate water supplies.

Abdul Wahab Benchenouf, 54, was convicted by the court of Algiers on charges of having brought into the country chemicals that if combined would be a "deadly carcinogen" in a water supply, officials said. The sentence can be appealed.

Mr. Benchenouf, who sympathised with the Algerian Democratic Movement of former President Ahmad Ben Bella, was arrested in September 1989 after he arrived clandestinely by sea.

Officials said they found the chemicals aboard the boat.

Mr. Benchenouf had fled the country after being sentenced in 1985 to 20 years in prison for "an attack on state security."

Iran rebels expand body

AMMAN (J.T.) — The National Council of Resistance, which acts as an umbrella organisation for Iranian rebels opposed to the theocratic regime in Tehran, has expanded its membership from 21 to 150, with over half of them women, according to a statement from the group.

Massoud Rajavi, who lives in Iraq, remained the president of the council, which met Dec. 13-21.

The Mujahedeen-e-Khalq, an the National Liberation Army (NLA) came under the umbrella of the council.

The council's statement, which was faxed to the Jordan Times, gave the names of some of the members of the new council as under.

Mrs. Ozra Alavi Taleqani, deputy chief of staff of the NLA, Mahboubeh Jamshidi, Mahdih Shahrokh, Mahvash Sepelchi, and Mehdi Abrishamchi, Mehdi Bara'i, Mahmoud Ata'i, and Ibrahim Zakeri, members of the NLA's general command staff, Gholam-Hossein Sadeqi and Hossein Massih, Iranian industrialists and prominent businessmen, Yazdan Haj-Hamzeh, deputy minister of interior and deputy minister of guidance after the fall of the Shah, Colonel Behzad Mo'ezzi, former commander of the Seventh Air Force base, Mosslem Eskandar Filabi, Iran's national wrestling champion, and Hossein Mahdavi, former governor of Zanjan, Maryam Matin-Dafarari and Reza Rohbani, members of the National Democratic Front, Isma'il Yaghma'i, poet and writer, Sanabarg Zahedi a prominent lawyer, Badri Pourtabakchi, director of the Mujahedeen's political organisation outside Iran, and Mohammad Mohaddessin, director of the Mujahedeen's international relations department.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541.
Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 628543.
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 711331.
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 715261.
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 711751.
Armenian International Church Tel. 685326.
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811295.
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 632624, 654932.
Church of the Nazarene Tel. 675691.
Church of the Redeemer Tel. 638576.

PRAYER TIMES
05:07 Fajr
06:30 (Sunrise) Dhuha
11:37 Dhur
14:21 Asr
16:04 Maghrib
18:07 Isha

CHURCHES
St. Mary of Nazareth Church Switich, Tel. 810740
Assembly of God Church, Tel. 632755.
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590.
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541.
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terrazza Church Tel. 622366

WEATHER
Bullish supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
It will be very cold and some clouds will appear at various altitudes. Winds will be easterly moderate to fresh. In Amman, it will be partly cloudy and winds will be northerly fresh and light waves sea.

Amman Min./Max. temp. 0/7
Aqaba 6/19
Deraige -2/9
Jordan Valley -4/14

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 3, Aqaba 17. Humidity readings: Amman 64 per cent. Aqaba 35 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS
NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Wael Kharoubi 615648
Dr. Waleed Kharoubi 610441
Dr. Raib Zaytoon 888683
Dr. Arafat Al Ashhab 683989
First pharmacy 661912
Fardous pharmacy 718336
Al Asana pharmacy 637053
Nairoukh pharmacy 623672
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yaacoub pharmacy 644945
Shimoon pharmacy 637660
Nairoukh pharmacy 623672
Najiy pharmacy 847632

DRUGS:
Dr. Amin Abu Eidah 244468
Alqada pharmacy (—)
ZARQA:
Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Emergency 630341
Fire Brigade 192, 621111, 637777
Blood Bank 75121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 63031
Hotel Complaints 628800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 897467
Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone 623101
Abdullah Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111

EMERGENCIES
Dr. Issa Al Omari 901266
Khafiz pharmacy 985417

HOSPITALS
AMMAN:
Hassan Medical Centre 813813/322
Khafiz Maternity, J. Amn. 64281/6
Al-Khif Maternity, J. Amn. 64244/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Pakistane, Shamsiabad 6641714
Sumadhi Hospital 669131
University Hospital 667227/9
Al-Muhsin Hospital 666127/37
Al-Abi, Abdali 6641646
Indian, Al-Jubayreah 7770115
Al-Bashir, J. Adrafah 75111/66
Army, Marka 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50
Amal Hospital 674153
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983333
Zarqa National Hospital (09)905560
Jib Sina Hospital (09)988732

FOR THE TRAVELLER
QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (06)53200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
05:30 Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)
07:30 Dhahran (RJ)
09:15 Abu Dhabi (RJ)
09:15 Vienna (RJ)
09:45 Moscow, Dubai (RJ)
10:00 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)

DEPARTURES
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
07:00 Amman (RJ)
08:30 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
10:00 Vienna (RJ)
10:50 Rome (RJ)
11:20 Paris, Brussels (RJ)
11:50 Geneva, Madrid (RJ)
12:00 London (RJ)
12:15 Frankfurt (RJ)
12:45 Cairo (RJ)
20:30 Jeddah (RJ)
20:45 Damascus (RJ)
21:00 Aden (RJ)
21:15 Larnaca (RJ)
21:30 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
22:00 Kuala Lumpur, Singapore (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)
16:45 Rome (AZ)
19:50 Beirut (ME)
23:00 Bucharest (RO)

MARKET PRICE
Upper/lower price in the market
Apple
Banana
Banana (Mekemman)
Beans
Cabbage
Carrot
Cauliflower
Cauliflower (large)
Cauliflower (small)
Eggplant
Garlic
Grapfruit
Lemon
Lemon (large)
Marrow (small)
Onion (dry)
Onion (green)
Orange
Pepper (hot)
Pepper (sweet)
Potato
Tomato
Spinach
Bitter
Green Olive

Other Flights (Terminal 1)
06:00 Beirut (P)
12:15 Larnaca, Via
17:45 Vienna (RJ)
01:00 Bucharest (RO)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)
16:45 Rome (AZ)
19:50 Beirut (ME)
23:00 Bucharest (RO)

MARKET PRICE
Upper/lower price in the market
Apple
Banana
Banana (Mekemman)
Beans
Cabbage
Carrot
Cauliflower
Cauliflower (large)
Cauliflower (small)
Eggplant
Garlic
Grapfruit
Lemon
Lemon (large)
Marrow (small)
Onion (dry)
Onion (green)
Orange
Pepper (hot)
Pepper (sweet)
Potato
Tomato
Spinach
Bitter
Green Olive

مكتبة الأصل

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Season for tolerance

IT SEEMS to be an appropriate time of the year to examine in proper perspective the frenzied religious strife in India that was provoked by the destruction of the sixteenth century mosque at Ayodhya by Hindu fanatics a few weeks ago. The act has sent shock waves across not only the Indian subcontinent but also elsewhere in the Muslim and non-Muslim worlds.

In retrospect, the issue that triggered the violence between Muslims and Hindus in India and elsewhere in the world goes beyond the demolition of a Muslim shrine or the attempted construction of a temple on the ruins of the mosque. Rather, the issue is the clear result of accumulative religious intolerance that is witnessed in the former Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union as well as other parts of the world. The common denominator of all such religious strife is the dire neglect to promote positive tolerance between the various faiths in the world throughout the past centuries.

Even on our own turf, here in the Middle East region, there is an equally ominous neglect of the urgent and pressing need to take note of religious differences and promote genuine tolerance to fight them. It goes without saying that some of the most barbaric and wicked wars witnessed by the world were motivated, sparked or inspired by religious rivalries. Since all monotheistic religions have a commonality of at least mundane interests and objectives, it would have been prudent to accentuate the similarities between them rather than to highlight their differences. This requires a well-considered and deliberate effort by all such faiths to cement appreciation and understanding instead of stressing the negative.

It is a great pity that there is hardly a serious national, regional or international effort to promote such an understanding.

On the international level, there has been, to be sure, several attempts to articulate a call for religious tolerance that found expression in international conventions. Yet such legal attempts to combat religious hatred were never translated into actions and thoughts. There is obviously a consensus that nurturing mutual religious respect and affirmative tolerance need to be inculcated in the minds, hearts and spirits of children at the formative years if there is going to be any hope whatsoever to bring about true and lasting religious coexistence.

As long as peoples and governments refrain from doing their homework before tragedy strikes, there can be no excuse for acting surprised when Hindu and Muslim militants react violently the way they did in recent episodes. As the conflict between them was either brushed aside or allowed to simmer for so long, there should be little wonder about what happened in recent weeks.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

THE UNITED Nations has dispatched an envoy, James Jonah, to the Middle East region to discuss the question of the Palestinian deportees; but nothing positive could be expected from his mission, said Al Ra'i daily Monday. The paper said that even though the U.N. envoy started his mission, we have heard no condemnation of Israel's action and defiance of the U.N. Security Council resolutions by the secretary general who is supposed to speak for the world organisation and defend its resolutions. The United Nations has not ceased levelling accusations and threats at Iraq for its alleged defiance of the U.N. resolutions, but the Western world is doing nothing against Israel's open defiance and acts of oppression and aggression, the paper said. It said that we do not expect the envoy to return to New York with something new or a positive move that would relieve the ordeal of the Palestinian deportees, neither are we expecting something constructive from the United Nations which can only speak with the voice of the U.S. administration, the paper pointed out. It said that the Western leaders enjoy their Christmas holidays at a time when the deportees continue to suffer in from cold, hunger and disease. The paper said that the deportees are the victims of the Israeli aggression, the impotent United Nations and the so-called new world order. Confronted by Israel's intransigent position, which is backed by the Western powers, the United Nations seems unable to come to the aid of the victims of aggression; it can only receive and execute orders concerning matters related to Iraq coming from Washington, London, Paris and sometimes Moscow.

TWO WEEKS have elapsed since the expulsion of the Palestinian citizens to Lebanon took effect but no collective Arab action has been taken to deal with the situation, said Al Dustour daily. Nothing has been done by the Arab states to end the ordeal of the 400 deportees who are exposed to cold, hunger and thirst, and nothing is being done to reflect the feelings and sympathies of the millions of Arab masses in solidarity with the deported Palestinians, said the daily. It is regrettable to say that the only demonstration held in support of the deportees was that which was organised by the Israeli Peace Now movement, in Tel Aviv, and that the only organisation which is following up on the situation is the Red Cross, said the daily. It seems that the Arabs are sufficing themselves with calls to the world community to bear its responsibility and the world public opinion to move quickly and end the human tragedy, added the daily. It said that the Arabs act as if they were not part of the world community and had no responsibility towards their kinsmen who are suffering day and night. It is time for the Arab countries to transcend the stage of expressing sympathy and embark on practical steps to end the ordeal of the deportees, starting with providing food and clothing to them, followed by collecting contributions to their families, urged the paper. The paper said that the situation in South Lebanon is, in effect, another Arab-Israeli confrontation.

The View from Fourth Circle

Double standards and the old water torture syndrome

The juxtaposition this week of the United States' enthusiasm to enforce U.N. Security Council resolutions in southern Iraq and its less activist approach to enforcing equally valid Security Council resolutions in Palestine once again dramatises the relevant issue of international, particularly American, double standards in the Middle East. American officials and many others in the West will shrug off this comment as more hot air and empty verbiage from those corners of the Arab World that are an endless source of both. To an extent, they are correct.

We point out the double standards dilemma without being able to do much about it — for the time being. So we sound like a broken record, always complaining, accusing, challenging, but without much to show for it. I raise the issue again, however, not simply to repeat a tired old line, but to try and show how the consistency of international double standards will inevitably result in a severe reaction from the Arab/Islamic World. That reaction will be anti-Israeli, anti-American, perhaps anti-Christian and anti-foreign, probably violent, and almost certainly will result in political forces far more troublesome to Israel and the West than the forces that define the Arab/Islamic World today.

The double standards issue, of course, was probably the single greatest reason for widespread grassroots Arab opposition to the U.S.-led military intervention in the Gulf crisis two years ago. The fact that little has changed since then in American and overall western attitudes raises serious questions about the ability of the U.S.-led "coalition" to learn from contemporary experiences, and to defuse political pressures in the Middle East by addressing their root causes. It is a bad omen for the future.

When American Air Force planes shot down an Iraqi fighter jet over the air exclusion zone in southern Iraq last Sunday, both President George Bush and President-elect Bill Clinton said that the U.S. troops were acting to enforce U.N. resolutions. Interestingly, they did not defend the military action, as they usually have, on the grounds that Saddam Hussein is evil personified, that Iraq poses a mortal threat to the security of western civilisation, or other such dramatic rhetoric. They were implementing U.N. resolutions and, the emphasis should not be missed, let no one doubt the resolve of the United States in implementing U.N. resolutions!

Personally, I think the Bush-Clinton statements are very good. I applaud both men for their resolve and their commitment to implementing U.N. resolutions. I wish Iraq had not invaded Kuwait and allowed itself to be badly mauled by the combination of U.S.-led western technological superiority, political opportunism, and intellectual goulash. But all of this happened, and Iraq is now paying the short-term price for its mistakes and aggressions.

The most fruitful Arab/Islamic position today, I would suggest, would be to push for strict implementation of all U.N. resolutions with equal fervour, because there are many more U.N. resolutions that please us than that displease us. Also, we look foolish criticising Israel, the United States and the West in general for their double standards if we indicate that we want to play the same game. We cannot ask for the implementation of U.N. resolutions in Palestine and Lebanon and Bosnia-Herzegovina while asking for other resolutions in Iraq, Libya or elsewhere to be ignored.

The strong Bush-Clinton position on using U.S. forces to

implement U.N. resolutions should be seized by the Arab/Islamic World as an opening for a more coherent policy to resolve the many conflicts of our region. The problem with the Bush-Clinton posture is that these fellows look like fools if they justify their actions in southern Iraq on the basis of implementing U.N. resolutions, while they do nothing comparable to implement scores of other resolutions in Palestine. The particularly dramatic contrast this week is between the Americans working to implement the U.N.'s will in southern Iraq, but doing very little to resolve the problem of Israel's expelling 415 Palestinians from their homes and defying a U.N. resolution demanding their repatriation. The contrast is between the Americans shooting down an Iraqi jet, and the Israelis shooting down American credibility.

There are other dimensions to this dilemma, of course, notably the stupidity of the Israelis (for promoting the very same extremist forces they claim to be fighting), and the incompetence of the Arabs in the face of such provocation by Israel and humiliation among the masses of Arab people. These are constants that we live with all the time and that generate their own counter-dynamics in the region. The double standards of the U.S. and the West, however, are qualitatively a very different kind of force, and probably more dangerous and explosive in the long run.

Western double standards are the common denominator that binds the several different sources of frustration, suffering and humiliation that define much of the Arab World today. Right or wrong, the average person in most Arab countries will tell you that foreign manipulation or exploitation is largely to blame for the Israeli-Palestinian problem, the perpetuation of incompetent, autocratic and often corrupt Arab regimes, the fragmentation and foreign dependence of the Arab region, the regional dominance of Israel, and severe economic disparities within the region, characterised by close western links with the oil-rich Gulf states.

In this pan-Arab intellectual and political context, the continuing double standards of the U.S. and the West in southern Iraq and Palestine simply accentuate the feeling that we are powerless victims of an Israeli-American-western alliance that is at once brutal, merciless and unprincipled. The simultaneous images of Arabs/Muslims denied their national and human rights, and freezing or dying in southern Lebanon or Bosnia-Herzegovina, while existing U.N. Security Council resolutions to assist them remain unimplemented, will intensify the rage that builds within the hearts of Arabs and Muslims in most parts of the world.

Rage, however, is an unpredictable factor. It accumulates slowly, over decades and centuries, until one day it explodes. The modern Arab/Islamic World has proved itself very capable of absorbing repeated blows, internalising successive humiliations, and accumulating vast amounts of anger and frustration. Israel, its western supporters and some particularly ignorant and insensitive Arab regimes believe that the Arab/Islamic capacity for humiliation is endless. They believe and they say that this, too, shall pass, that the incident of the 415 expelled Palestinians will be forgotten in time.

Arab and western governments and many Israelis may calculate that they have only to put up with some fleeting expressions and gestures of Arab anger — an Arab League statement, some press

commentaries, sit-ins at a few Red Cross offices — as time all will return to normal. I disagree. I think the dynamic is not being appreciated by Israel, the U.S., the ruling Arab power structures that are blind to the brewing beneath their deceptively comfortable chairs.

The repeated double standards we see again this week very much responsible for giving rise to the political fire that fuelled the major political expressions of Arab sentiment in the last half a century — from Massad pan-Arabism in the 1950s and 60s, to the Palestinian resistance in the 1970s, to the Islamist and democratisation movements last decade and a half. What motivated the emergence of Islamic Jihad in the first place? What gave birth to groups that did not exist a few decades ago? It was, inter alia, the double standards of the world in addressing the human and national rights of the people of this region — the steady, cumulative, corrosive and consistently humiliating sages from Israel and the West that our rights and aspirations somehow lesser than theirs.

This kind of intellectual, moral, emotional, and aggression cannot be maintained for years and decades eliciting a counterreaction from proud and sensible people in this region. That reaction has been self-evident for a decade. It sparked the Iranian revolution in 1979, for example, and it will be fuelled further by the continued insults from Israel and the West this week. That reaction has the form of Arabs/Muslims demanding a more responsive, democratic, pluralistic and moral political and economic order corresponds to their social traditions and their national identity — whether this is Arabist, Islamist, or anything else — is appropriate.

Each episode of blatant double standards, duplicity or hypocrisy is like a drop of water falling on the forehead of a being subjected to the old water torture technique. The drop each drop in itself is absorbed, leaving no obvious damage of distress. But the cumulative effect of drop after drop is agonising and, ultimately, explosive and deadly.

The pressures accumulating within the Arab World are the triple blow of Israel, western double standards, and home-grown ruling Arab heavy-handedness and incoherence being internalised for the moment. The pressures are building up at home. This is why so many Arab governments and spend most of their time trying to prevent domestic explosion as in Algeria, Egypt, and other politically distressed. This is why so many Arab governments are desperately trying to maintain mass mind control, through their mosques and their communications media, in a frantic bid to keep the

This strategy will not work in the face of the relentless aggression that caused people to become angry first place. Every Iraqi plane shot down, every Palestinian out of his or her country, every Bosnian woman raped, every Arab League meeting, every smiling American president, the praises of U.N. resolutions is another affront, another screw, another drop of water on our forehead, smashing with unbearable, almost indescribable force.

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Never again

By Leslie H. Gelb

M. KAHIL



nations must declare ethnic cleansing and the slaughter of civilians by military forces unacceptable. And we must be prepared to put weapons behind our words."

George Shultz, his secretary of state, reinforced this point last week with barely controlled rage: "When we say, 'never forget,

never again,' what are we talking about? What is it that we shouldn't forget? Of course, the Jews in Germany, and of course, what can happen if anti-Semitism gets out of hand. But more broadly, we're saying, when forces of intolerance go wild, you get a result that is basically intolerable. So if we say 'never

again,' it means we say we shouldn't stand for that."

But our present leaders do not agree. Listen to those who oppose stronger action in Bosnia. They say we cannot commit greater force there for "merely humanitarian" reasons. Listen again, "merely humanitarian" reasons. When we come to think of

humanitarian concerns as "mere," we are arriving at the end of civilisation.

Bush administration officials also tell us that sending 30,000 U.S. forces to Somalia is acceptable, though "merely humanitarian," because the task there is "easy." On the other hand, they

say that applying more stop genocide in Bosnia hard" and will draw quagmire.

"This argument is both absurdly misleading and because combatting not simply be dismissed hard." The degree of limits what it is possible affects the choice of me does not alter the moral action. Misleading because real alternatives in Bosnia the present half-hearted effort and a quagmire.

As Mr. Shultz argue he's no bleeding-heart Bosnia presents "a definable mission, and it does involve getting into a swam that arm the Muslims, or trade embargo and the over Bosnia, bomb Serbia in Bosnia and military Yugoslavia and prov havens in Bosnia.

Most of these steps are the vision and will of the thing Bush team. Bill Clinton towards more decisive a but his administration take hold for more than That places the burden mediate and strong action squarely on Europe.

If Europeans once again genocide and evil and be their brothers' keepers Europeans may not want Europe's keepers for nger either. Cynicism to believe that helping through its latest coalition is "too hard" to humanitarian" reasons: New York Times.

Clinton cabinet has tough road ahead

By William Spasato
Reuter

LITTLE ROCK, Arkansas — President-elect Bill Clinton has secured the diversity he badly wanted in his cabinet, but has turned to relative newcomers in some of the toughest policy areas facing his administration.

Clinton's 16-member cabinet will have four black members, the first woman attorney general and a wide range of backgrounds from corporate executives to lifelong political service.

But none of the appointees has run a government department and most are new to the problems of supervising a bureaucracy.

In addition, some department heads will be cutting the size of their operations even as they try to cope with pressing policy problems.

As Clinton's January 20 inauguration

nears, nowhere are the problems more apparent than in the Agriculture Department. Mr. Clinton selected as Agriculture Secretary Representative Mike Espy, 39, who is black.

In his new job, he will supervise 113,000 employees and a department with an annual budget of \$60 billion.

In accepting the appointment, Mr. Espy spoke of the need to transform the department, in which the number of employees has soared even as the number of farmers shrinks.

Mr. Espy does represent one of the poorest and most heavily agricultural districts in the country and has focused his congressional efforts on agricultural issues.

Agriculture analysts say Mr. Espy is capable and is knowledgeable in some agriculture issues, but the trade dispute with the

European Community and the recent default by Russia on some grain loans are new to him. "I think it's going to be a real tough job," said analyst William Leshner.

Representative Les Aspin takes over defence as deep cuts are demanded on top of already major spending reductions.

Mr. Aspin, chairman of the House of Representatives Armed Services Committee, has been widely praised for his knowledge of the Pentagon, but is a politician. He now has a department with an annual budget of \$281 billion, slightly larger than the gross national output of South Korea.

Democrats, looking for cash to boost social spending while cutting the federal deficit, are keen to make deep cuts in defence. These would come on top of cuts already instituted by President

George Bush, which have already lowered morale.

"When Les hops the fence and lands here he'll find out that 'cut' has a new meaning," said a Pentagon official who spoke on condition he not be identified.

A comprehensive health care plan, which policymakers have grappled with for years, will be the first headache for Health and Human Services Secretary-designate Donna Shalala.

But she has little experience in the health care field, having spent most of her career in academic life. She currently heads the University of Wisconsin at Madison. Federico Pena, former mayor of Denver, likewise comes into the Transportation Department with little direct experience in his most pressing problems.

One-third of the major U.S. airlines have either gone out of business in the past two years or

are in bankruptcy protection. With highways crumbling and railways' share of the market shrinking, he acknowledged that "almost all of our transportation budget industries are in trouble."

But Mr. Pena's only concrete experience was pushing through a new airport for Denver while mayor and serving on a state commission that charted a 20-year transportation plan.

Mickey Kantor, chairman of Mr. Clinton's election campaign, must also do some quick studying for his high-profile post as U.S. trade representative. Mr. Kantor is a lawyer-lobbyist and has little background in world trade, a field likely to get thornier as Mr. Clinton tries to get tough with U.S. competitors.

Mr. Clinton has brought in some experience as well. Treasury Secretary Lloyd Bentsen, 71, is a 22-year Senate

veteran with a solid finance and trade issue.

Representative Leon Bryant, budget director, should find trouble as he heads the new budget committee.

Warren Christopher, secretary of state, held 2 job at the State Department during the presidency of Carter.

The large number of new appointees, including Mr. Clinton, should be good news. President-elect Al Gore He is eager to shake than flattering image of

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Features

Oman, the land of Sindbad and incense

By Ghazi Saadi

At the dawn of history, the land of the beautiful land of Oman has been associated with legends. From Oman came the stories of the sea of Sindbad, Ibn Batuta and the prophet Job. It was also the source of incense, copper and the Old World. The ancient Omanis kept secrets of their profitable trade that led them north through the King's Highway to the markets of Egypt and the Gulf.

The Friends of Archaeology in Oman last month, Ms. Mary McQuitty from Oxford University led the cultural mission. She is the former director of British Institute for Archaeology in Amman.

Visitors to Oman are surprised by the degree of development that has taken place in the last 20 years. The Omanis progressed in developing their country, but with a concerted effort to avoid destroying their heritage. They maintained the spirit of the human being and social structures and preserved the beauty of their country in its natural environment.

Those who knew Oman in the past are stunned by what they now see. At that time, when an Arab ventured out at night in Muscat, he was required to carry a lantern to show the way. Now, lights cover every village in the country. There were only about 50 metres of paved roads in Muscat, whereas modern roads connect all corners of the country.

Schools and hospitals were almost non-existent then, but now, education, health and social services are considered the three priorities of the Omani government, and they are enjoyed by all Omanis. Security is particularly sensitive issue in Oman and is well-funded due to oil reasons. During the 1970s, the American oil companies staged bloody covert wars in Oman because of the

conflict with the British oil companies over the oil-rich oasis of Al Birm. The conflict lasted for several years and caused hate and division among the Omani tribes. It was followed in 1970 by a vicious war with the socialist government in Aden. The war ended in 1975 after heavy losses in men and money.

When the war ended, Sultan Qaboos faced the issues at hand wisely, incorporated the national security within the revenues from oil and national resources to all his people, exempted citizens from taxes and limited custom duties to five per cent.

As a result of proper economic policies and a gradual pattern of development, the influx of foreigners was limited. This was different from what happened in neighbouring countries. Therefore, the ratio of foreigners stayed within 20 per cent of the native population of 1.5 million.

and the Omanis remained masters of their country where they carry out most of the tasks, no matter how big or small.

History of Oman

Recent archaeological excavations indicate that human civilisation in Oman goes back to about 1200 B.C. During its history, Oman had strong, continuous cultural and commercial ties with the land of two rivers (modern Iraq), Persia, India and East Africa.

In the 3rd century B.C. Oman was called "Magan", meaning "land of copper" in the Sumerian language. Oman is still rich in copper, and copper-mining is an important source of national revenue.

The Arab tribes of "Ad", mentioned in the Holy Koran, had inhabited the region since the dawn of history. The Arabisation of Oman was enhanced in the

early 2nd century B.C. by the migration of the Yemeni tribes of Bani Azz to Oman under the leadership of Malik Ibn Fahm after the destruction of the Marib dam. Yemeni tribes also went north to Syria and Iraq.

The Azidis embraced Islam willingly, and their King Jaifar Ibn Al Julandi and his people were assured safety by the Islamic leader 'Amr Ibn Al As, sent by the Prophet Mohammad. The Omanis were good Muslims, and they fought the rejectionists after Mohammad's death and joined in the Islamic invasions and the spread of Arab civilisation.

In 1507, the Portuguese used their naval force to colonise some of the coastal areas of Oman to secure the trade route to India. This area remained under their control for a century and a half. The Omanis resisted the invaders under the leadership of their King Nasser Ibn Murshid Al Ya'rubi who was able to liberate some cities by 1624. His successor, the Imam Saif Ibn Sultan Al Ya'rubi, completed the task and liberated Muscat in 1649. He continued chasing the Portuguese to the coasts of India and East Africa and took over their settlements, some of which continued under Omani control until 1965.

In 1744, the leadership of Oman came to the Al Bu Said family, which had descended from the noble Omani Azz tribe, under the Imam Ahmad Ibn Said who adopted Al Rustaq as his capital. This sultan was a real Sindbad and a lover of the sea and adventure. He himself piloted his ship and moved with his naval fleet from East Africa to Baluchistan, eliminating pirates at sea and thieves on land. It is said that in his time, goods were left in Muscat harbour unattended and his power extended from the shores of Basra to East Africa. He was followed by strong sultans, the most famous of whom was Said Ibn Sultan in 1804, who expanded the Omani empire and established commercial centres in Persia, Pakistan and East Africa. He was the first to recognise the United States of America and sent the first Arab ambassador who arrived on the

first Arab ship to reach New York in 1840.

With the arrival of British domination and their commercial monopoly on international trade in the Indian Ocean and East Africa, Oman began to decline and deteriorate culturally. That situation totally changed with the beginning of the rule of Sultan Qaboos in 1970. He studied in Britain and had been kept outside the country for some time. When he came to power, he immediately began reconstruction of his country and realised stunning achievements within two decades that pushed Oman into the modern age.

Geography and tourist attractions

Oman is distinguished by its breathtaking natural environment and its varied climatic regions. It has begun to carefully open its doors to foreign tourists. Oman has an area of 312,000

square kilometres, or more than three times the area of Jordan. The population is estimated at 1.5 million, but it should be noted that there has never been a census.

The most beautiful regions in Oman are in the Dhofar Governorate, which extends 560 kilometres along the shores of the Arabian Sea. Its capital is the lovely city of Salalah. Salalah means "shining city," and the monsoons convert the mountains into a sea of rain surrounding Salalah. The climate of this region is semitropical. It has vast areas of green coconut palms and tropical plants and flowers. Its people live on agriculture and fishing. Fish is a part of most dishes, and visitors to Oman enjoy the abundance and variety of fresh fish. Frankincense trees grow in its mountainous regions, and the frankincense trade was the source of great wealth for Oman in the old times and for the

northern Arab kingdoms of Tadmur (Palmyra) and Petra.

Farms are irrigated by the "afaj" system. Canals collect spring and rain water that flows due to gravity to different villages by aqueducts and lined canals. This engineering system is similar to that used in Petra, which was irrigated from Wadi Musa springs with water reaching the city by canals dug in the walls of the Siq. Their remains are still visible today.

It is interesting to note that many tribes in this region carry the same names as families in the south of Jordan; for instance, the family of Al Hras whose members live in 'Ayna village, near Tafila, and also in Amman.

And there is the beautiful mountainous region of Niwza that is historically significant and famous for its fortified castles built in strategic locations. There are more than 500 Omani castles; the most beautiful of them, by far, is the Jabrin castle, which is

now being renovated under the supervision of Italian engineers. This castle was the residence of the most famous sultan of Oman, Al Imam Saif Al Ya'rubi.

The capital Muscat is located on the shores of the Arabian Sea. It is a beautiful, modern city that has maintained its Arab roots. Those who planned this city, some of whom were Jordanians, were able to create architectural homogeneity in its districts and to avoid the eclectic construction styles now dominant in our capital, Amman.

Finally, Oman is a country that is truly worth visiting. It is clean, and its people are extremely thoughtful. You do not hear one loud voice in the street. They live in their country with dignity. It is easy for Jordanians to associate with them. In Oman there is serious concern about the environment and its beauty. There is no doubt that all the Omanis love their country and are proud of it.



Three generations of Omanis



Omani castle

Palestinians press U.N. envoy

Continued from page 1

They have been expelled in Israeli troops, meanwhile, led Israeli Arab leaders from a truck convoy of food and aid to Lebanon to aid the Palestinians.

They blocked their path at the Hanikra crossing. The Israelis, including at least one of the Israeli parliament, said a group prayer for the aid of the evictees and turned down Ashrawi, a West Bank leader who is spokeswoman

for the Palestinian delegation to the Middle East peace talks, told reporters after meeting with Mr. Jonah that the fate of the Palestinians had become "an issue of immediate human urgency and concern... because of the tragic circumstances under which they are living."

The evictees, she said, "should not be made pawns in a political game."

Dr. Ashrawi said the Palestinians demanded that the 415 be returned immediately, in line with Security Council Resolution 799. Any aid, she added, should come through Israel.

"It (Israel) is responsible for

the (evictees), for their well-being, and it has to be held accountable for the fact of the (expulsion), the mass expulsion," she said.

Dr. Ashrawi noted that none of those expelled had been charged, tried or convicted of the killings of six Israeli soldiers, which is what prompted the expulsion.

Israeli newspaper quoted unidentified security officials as saying the army will have to take action to bring back any Palestinians expelled in error.

An army review showed that seven, among them a 16-year-old detained for spraying political slogans, were expelled contrary to orders by regional commanders, Israeli Radio and the news-

papers said. The number could be as high as 10, the radio said.

They said the mistakes apparently resulted from poor coordination, mistaken identity and negligence. The army had rounded up those slated for expulsion within hours and put them on buses headed for Lebanon.

News reports said five military tribunals have been set up to hear individual appeals by expelled men, and 15 more would be established.

Mr. Jonah conferred Sunday with Prime Minister Rabin and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres. Mr. Rabin repeated his contention that the evictees are Lebanon's responsibility, and accused

Beirut of using the aid issue as a ploy to force their return.

Israeli news reports Monday said Mr. Jonah, in "politely aggressive" terms, expressed understanding for Lebanon's refusal to deal with people dumped on its doorstep by Israel.

The expelled Palestinians said meanwhile they received more food and some clothes, mainly underwear, brought on mules by villagers over mountains at night but it was a small amount compared to the needs of the 415 men.

"We couldn't sleep because of the cold and the snow," said Ali Mahmoud Abu Kass, 57. "This is a real tragedy and the world is only watching. What law says we

have to freeze to death?"

The Palestinians staged a second dawn to dusk fast to eke out food reserves and tried to light fires with wet sticks as a cold wind swept through the camp. A nearby stream froze over.

"Our conditions are deteriorating. The weather is getting worse and worse," said Dr. Aziz Duwak. "We are shivering and trembling under our blankets."

Correspondents found fresh food hidden in tents on Sunday, enough to supply the Palestinians for perhaps a day. One Palestinian aid it was brought by pro-Iranian Hizbollah (Party of God) guerrillas.

Lebanese troops allow only journalists to reach the camp.

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Palestinian cold war nearing end

(Continued from page 1)

others in the territories will be decided by "democratic means," said a PLO official in Ramallah.

If an agreement takes place, most of Hamas representatives to come from the territories because their population is there," said the PLO official.

Their popular support outside the territories is strong. The 180 "phantom" members of the PNC in the occupied territories are expected to elect representatives from labour unions, professional associations, other popular organisations, such as the women's federation as well as the heads of chambers of commerce and industry.

Hamas supporters picked up about 30 per cent of the vote on the board in student and city elections in various parts of the West Bank and Gaza last year.

We expect that Hamas will have the same number of seats in the PFLP or (the Damascus-based faction of the PLO) as Mr. Hilaal said. The PFLP has around 20 seats in the diaspora part of the PNC.

The naming of the 180 PNC members in the occupied terri-

ories is not expected to take place before the spring of 1993. Some political analysts close to the Damascus Ten fear that the PLO may want to pull Hamas into the PLO/PNC fold in preparation for an agreement with Israel.

"Mr. Arafat will want Hamas within his fold if he decides to make any agreement (via the negotiating team) with Israel," said an Amman-based observer.

Other argue that while Hamas also has a vested interest in being inside the PNC, it would use its option to pull out of the PNC should Mr. Arafat and the negotiators choose to agree to a framework that Hamas fundamentally objects to.

"Hamas is in a position of power because it can pull out of any agreement with the PLO even if the group chooses to join the PNC," said another observer who is close to Hamas.

But many political analysts say the real question is if the PLO-backed negotiating team can afford to come to terms with Israel without the implicit approval of Hamas and other leading members of the Damascus Ten.

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Timberwolves' Christian Laettner (left) defends against Pistons' Woolridge.

Timberwolves Laettner criticised as losses mount

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Christian Laettner, at first embraced by his Timberwolves teammates, is being pushed away as Minnesota's losses mount.

Chuck Person, who once promised to take Laettner under his wing, has become increasingly unhappy with what he perceives as Laettner's selfishness.

Doug West, who once said that adding a proven winner like Laettner would make the Timberwolves a better team in the National Basketball Association, is starting to have his doubts.

Michael Williams, the point guard who is paid to distribute the ball to the team's top scorers, has ignored the team's high-scoring rookie, who played this past summer as a member of the veteran U.S. Olympic "dream team."

"Laettner only says he'll keep trying," Williams said. "My personal motivation is always there," he said after scoring 26 points in Saturday's 113-105

loss to the Atlanta Hawks, Minnesota's sixth straight defeat and 10th in 11 December games.

Late in the first quarter, Laettner stole the ball from Stacey Augmon and drove the length of the court for a dunk.

Great play, right? It was, except that West was alone ahead of the field.

"I mean, the open guy has to get the ball," Person said. "If a guy is 10 metres in front of you and you dribble and dunk it, is that basing the decision on winning? Or is it personal loyalty?"

After a loss to Sacramento, West said that some of his teammates "think they know too much." He wouldn't name names, but Laettner clearly was one of the players West meant.

In Saturday's game, Williams twice looked right at Laettner, who was begging for the ball, instead of passing. Williams took long jumpers.

Laettner said he is trying to do what is being asked of him.

Tyson conviction top sports story in U.S.

NEW YORK (AP) — Mike Tyson's rape conviction was the year's top sports story in the United States. The sport of the year, however, obviously was basketball.

Tyson's conviction last Feb. 10 for the rape of beauty queen Desiree Washington was voted the top sports story of the year in balloting by Associated Press sports editors and broadcasters in the United States.

The No. 2 story was the ouster of U.S. Major League Baseball Commissioner Fay Vincent, and five of the next six top vote-getters were basketball stories.

The saga of the former heavyweight boxing champion, sentenced to six years in prison last March 26, received 22 first-place votes and 448 total points in balloting. Voters were asked to pick their top 10 stories.

Magic Johnson was at the heart of the next two stories. Third place, with 304 votes, went to the "dream team," the U.S. Olympic basketball team that breezed to the gold medal at the Barcelona Olympics, led by Johnson. The dream team received 11 first-place votes, second only to Tyson's conviction.

Johnson's own story, his comeback and second retirement, was voted No. 4 with just one point less than the dream team, 303, and eight first-place votes.

The Toronto Blue Jays' victory in the U.S. Major League Baseball World Series was fifth, followed by three more basketball stories: Larry Bird's retirement and repeats by the Chicago Bulls as NBA Champions and Duke Blue Devils as U.S. College champions.

The Blue Jays' six-game victory over Atlanta received 272 points, Bird got 262 points, the Bulls had 173, and Duke 167.

The dual national College Football Championships of Miami and Washington (109 points, one first-place vote) and the retirement of U.S. stock car auto race driver Richard Petty (103 points) rounded out the top 10 stories.

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WITH OMAR SHARIF & TANNAR HIRSCH
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WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

Q.1—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠9 ♠10 ♠K9 ♠A7652
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 ♠ 2 ♠
What action do you take?

Q.2—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠K9 ♠KQ ♠AQJ2 ♠A993
Your right-hand opponent opens the bidding with one club. What action do you take?

Q.3—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠K9 ♠KQ ♠AQJ2 ♠A993
The bidding has proceeded:
East South West North
1 ♠ 2 ♠
What do you bid now?

Q.4—As South, vulnerable, you hold:

♠7 ♠AK6 ♠KJ93 ♠AQ1092
The bidding has proceeded:
South West North East
1 ♠ 2 ♠
What do you bid now?

Q.5—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠K9 ♠KQ ♠AQJ2 ♠A993
The bidding has proceeded:
South West North East
1 ♠ 2 ♠
What do you bid now?

Q.6—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠A5 ♠K2 ♠K10954 ♠KJ85
The bidding has proceeded:
South West North East
1 ♠ 2 ♠
What do you bid now?

1st Division Basketball Championship Orthodox, Ahli clash Wednesday; Jazireh, Hussein seek 3rd place

By Aileen Bannayan
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The final stage of the first round in basketball's First Division Championship begins Tuesday when Al Jalil play Homentmen and Al Hussein play Al Watani in Irbid, while Al Jazireh play Al Abbasi in Amman. The results of these matches will make things clear for the first round of the championship which began earlier this month and will end Wednesday when Jordan's all-time rivals Al Orthodox, the current titleholders, and Al Ahli clash at the Sports Palace Court. The match will be televised live on Jordan Television.

Al Ahli and Al Orthodox are now tied with 12 points in the overall standings, the latter leading on score difference. Both teams won all their matches quite easily, although they faced some trouble subduing the unrelenting Al Hussein who drew with Al Orthodox 24-24 in the first half of the match before leading 36-29 but eventually losing the match 104-77. Similarly Al Ahli beat Al Jazireh 86-61, the first half ending 41-31.

Al Hussein, Al Jazireh and Al Watani are now tied with 9 points in the overall standings. Al Hussein put up a big effort overcoming Homentmen who won the first half 57-56 but later lost the match 104-81 with two of their key players, Vasek Adjemian and Omar Shami, missing the match. Homentmen has scored their first win over Al Abbasi earlier in the week winning the match 78-73, the first half ending 46-30.

Al Jalil, who are still in sixth place after missing their match against Al Watani, scored a crucial 95-82 win over Al Hussein, and later lost 105-60 to Al



Al Ahli's team: Will they be able to win back the title?

Orthodox.

Meanwhile, Al Watani beat Al Abbasi 63-53, and lost to Al Ahli 117-63, the first half ending 63-27.

Al Orthodox seem well on their way to defeat Al Ahli as they have shown a tremendous form throughout the championship so far, scoring over 100 points in all their matches. They depend on the well-experienced Barakat brothers, Murad and Hilal, in addition to members of their under-22 team which beat Al Ahli to win their division championship. They include Muntaser Abul Tayyeb, Jan Sahlieh and Raed Al Haj.

Al Ahli, on the other hand, do not seem to be playing with the confidence and form that might enable them to win back

the title they won in 1990.

They mainly depend on scoring from outside the zone depending on Samir Murqus, Marwan Ma'touq and Yousef Zaghloul. Key guard, Naser Bushnah, who helped them clinch the title two seasons ago, has not shown his regular form after undergoing surgery on his injured ankle. Al Ahli's

younger players have not been a consistent force to be reckoned with and their Russian coach will undoubtedly have second thoughts as to who might be best for a final match that will somewhat determine this year's winner.

The second round of the championship will begin on Jan. 8.

STANDINGS

Team	W	L	SP	SA	Pts
Al Orthodox	6	—	845	400	12
Al Ahli	6	—	651	311	12
Al Hussein	3	3	518	528	9
Al Jazireh	3	3	476	493	9
Al Watani	3	3	351	479	9
Al Jalil	2	4	405	422	7
Homentmen	1	5	405	666	7
Al Abbasi	—	6	326	678	6

SPORTS NEWS IN BRIEF

Diving star Gao Min auctions gold medal

BEIJING (AP) — Chinese diving star Gao Min has auctioned off one of her gold medals to raise money for Beijing's bid for the 2000 Olympics and to set up a diving foundation. Official reports said Monday. The China Minting Corp. bought the medal for 770,000 yuan (\$134,380), the China youth daily (Zhongguo Qingnian Bao) and the Guangming Daily (Guangming Ribao) said. The reports did not say what the company planned to do with the medal, which Gao won in the 1991 World Championships springboard event. Previous reports said it was Gao's most treasured medal because she won it under difficult conditions. The 22-year-old diver, unbeaten on the springboard in major world competitions since 1986, has been plagued by injuries in recent years and retired after the 1992 Olympic games in Barcelona.

Endeavour robbed of Sydney-Hobart record

SYDNEY (R) — Gale force winds followed by a windless hole robbed the New Zealand maxi ketch Endeavour of the Sydney-Hobart race record Monday. The fickle conditions allowed Australian pocket maxi Amazon to claw back Endeavour's lead, following some 15 nautical miles astern late Monday. Endeavour

was within reach of the record Sunday as it ploughed across Australia's Bass Strait with its full 696 square metres of sail hoisted. But early Monday the 25-metre ketch, in its first major ocean race since being launched November 7, was forced to reduce its sail area to a tiny jib, reefed mainsail and no mizzen mast cloth by a gale force southwesterly front. But late Monday, with just 100 nautical miles to go, Endeavour sailed into a windless hole off the east coast of Tasmania, losing any chance of setting a new record.

Chiefs, Redskins earn NFL playoff berths

NEW YORK (R) — The Kansas City Chiefs and Washington Redskins Sunday landed the final two playoff berths in the National Football League. Kansas City scored three touchdowns on turnovers and Dave Krieg threw two touchdown passes to Jonathan Hayes as the Chiefs clinched a wild-card spot in the AFC playoffs with a 42-20 victory over the Denver Broncos. The defending Super Bowl champion Redskins were defeated by the Los Angeles Raiders, 21-20 Saturday, but won the final NFC playoff spot Sunday when the Green Bay Packers were routed by the Minnesota Vikings, 27-7. The Vikings already had clinched the NFC Central title. The Packers were seeking their first playoff berth since 1982. The Pittsburgh Steelers clinched a first-round by with a 23-13 victory over the Cleveland Browns.

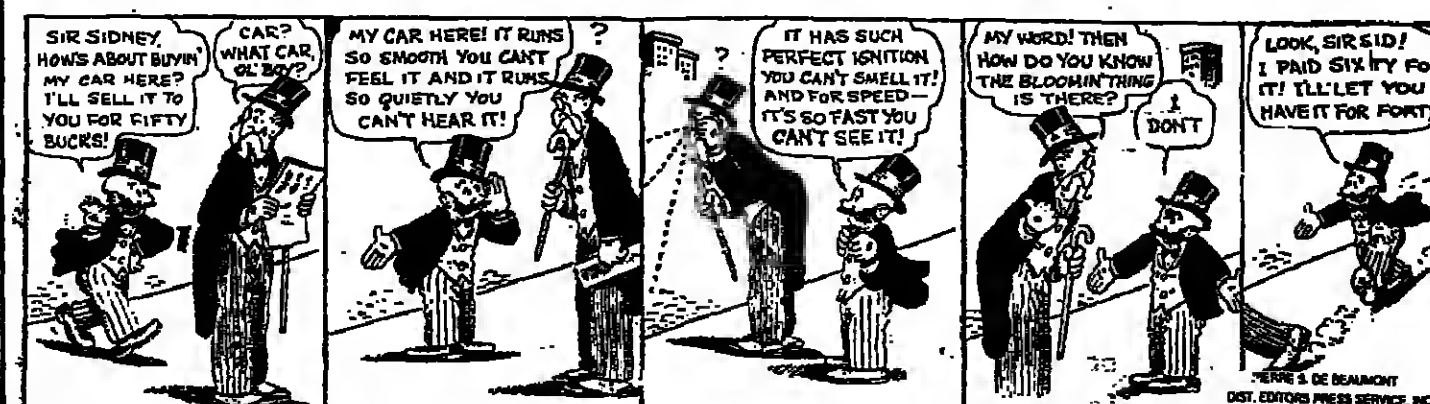
Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR TUESDAY DECEMBER 29, 1992

By Thomas S. Pearson, Astrologer, Carroll-Fletcher Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: Having done your duty, consulting with others and coming to a decision on how to operate in the future, you are now able to reduce your appointed tasks to a manageable reality.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) The daytime is excellent for making new arrangements where associates are concerned and then in the evening you can put in motion specific details.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Many tasks of a meticulous and fine nature can be done by you today after which you can get into the public eye and make some excellent progress.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) All sorts of interesting entertainment is now available to you so get appointments made and tonight do whatever tasks have been put aside.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) You can handle whatever pertains to home and family matters very well after which get off to some new amusements and have a wonderful time.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Talk about whatever interesting ideas permeate your consciousness today with those who can help materialize them and tonight do what your family desires.

VERGO: (August 22 to September 22) Put yourself in the position where you can add to your present income by whatever right are available and you can quick progress.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Be on the lookout for things you want the most are at your fingertips today tonight get into making budgeting of assets.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Private plans of all can be organized so you can more quickly and satisfactorily which you can get your affairs in order.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You find on admires you will aid you to get personal conditions that you are, that you can be with attachment for quiet happen.

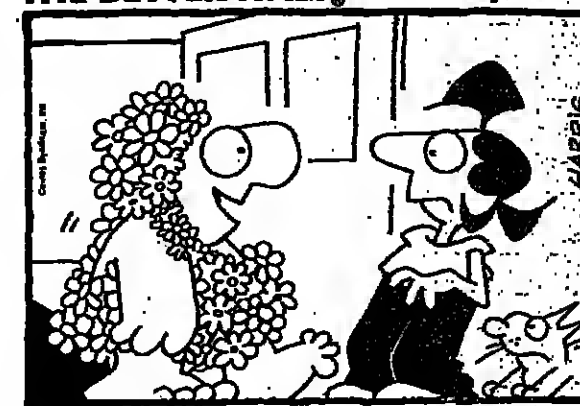
CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) What is your mind of a worldly nature about put into motion in a cog manner during the daytime tonight get off more into aims.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Listen to what your qualities tell you is a new progress and then make big towards this which can be used in public.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You can get into who promises you have made and through with ease and effort after which get off to new time make them yours.

THE BETTER HALF.

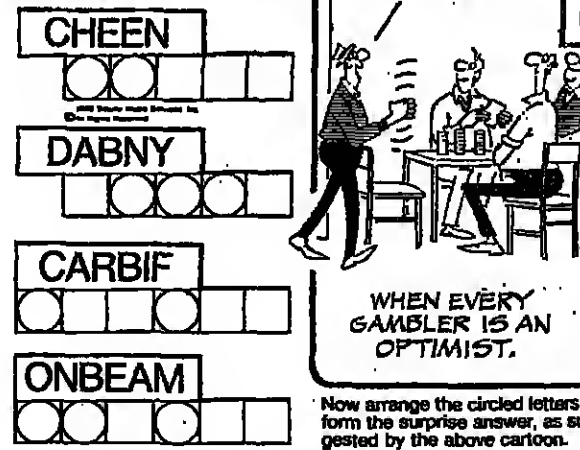
By Morris



"I told the florist I wanted to send you something really special for New Year's Eve!"

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

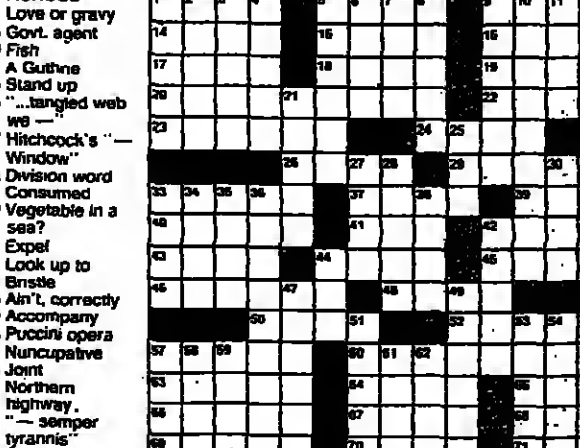


Answer here:

Saturday's Jumbles: DINER BELIE ACCEDE LANCER
Answer: Nice in the dark, even if it's wicked—A CANDLE

THE Daily Crossword

by Harvey L. Chew



Yesterday's Puzzle Solved:

1 Across: 1. Love or gravity
2. Govt. agent
3. Fish
4. A Gullible
5. Stand up
6. "...tangled web we are in"
7. Hitchhiker's "Window"
8. Division word
9. Consumed
10. Vegetable in a sea?
11. Explet
12. Look up to
13. Strife
14. TAE name
15. Nuncupative
16. Joint
17. Northern highway
18. "—senior tyrant"
19. Iron
20. Kind of year
21. The yoke's on them
22. Bkln, for one
23. Equine pen
24. Bambi's mom
25. Pizarro victim
26. Devious plan
27. Little bit
28. Vegetable in a composer?
29. A Flynn
30. Frighten
31. Confined
32. Style of painting
33. Informal about
34. Actor
35. Famed archer
36. Soft mineral
37. Spread
38. Clear
39. Vegetable in a constellation?
40. Peak
41. Sausage feature
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Economy

Britons' desire to save dents hopes of quick economic recovery

LONDON (R) — Britons saved more of their income in the third quarter of 1992 than in the second quarter, but the hopes of a quick economic recovery are being dented by higher consumer spending.

Figures from the Central Statistical Office (CSO) showed the savings ratio, the percentage of disposable income that people save, rose to 12.3 per cent in the

third quarter of this year from a revised 11.4 per cent in the previous quarter and 10.3 per cent a year earlier.

Economists said the figures showed that consumers remained cautious and were wary of spending spare cash.

Britain's monetary authorities hope that people will spend more and save less to give industry a

Financial Markets

In co-operation with Cairo Amman Bank

Currency	TOKYO CLOSE	TOKYO CLOSE
	25.12.92	26.12.92
sterling Pound	1.5215	1.5150
Deutsche Mark	1.5985	1.6028
Swiss Franc	1.4435	1.4473
French Franc	5.4545	5.4650**
Japanese Yen	123.70	123.93
European Currency Unit	122.20	1.2190**

USD Per STD
*Deposits Opening at 6:00 a.m. GMT

Interbank Interest Rates

Date: 28.12.1992

Currency	1 MTH	3 MTHS	6 MTHS	12 MTHS
U.S. Dollar	3.75	3.56	3.62	4.03
Sterling Pound	7.00	7.10	6.88	6.75
Deutsche Mark	8.81	8.68	8.25	7.68
Swiss Franc	6.10	5.75	5.65	5.35
French Franc	10.75	10.88	10.38	9.38
Japanese Yen	3.81	3.75	3.68	3.62
European Currency Unit	10.62	10.43	9.93	9.06

*Annual bid rates for amounts exceeding 1 U.S. Dollars 1,000,000 or equivalent.

Prices Metals

Date: 28.12.1992

Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm	Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm
Gold	334.35	6.50	Silver	3.71	.080

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

Date: 28.12.1992

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.6880	0.6900
Sterling Pound	1.0402	1.0454
Deutsche Mark	0.4282	0.4303
Swiss Franc	0.4743	0.4767
French Franc	0.1257	0.1263
Japanese Yen	0.5544	0.5572
Bank Guilder	0.3809	0.3828
Swedish Krona	0.0971	0.0976
Israeli Lira	0.0481	0.0483
Belgian Franc	0.02097	0.02107

Other Currencies

Date: 28.12.1992

Currency	Bid	Offer
Bahraini Dinar	1.7970	1.8200
Lebanese Lira	0.0360	0.0390
Saudi Riyal	0.1880	0.1840
Kuwaiti Dinar	2.8800	2.3000
Qatari Riyal	0.1850	0.1872
Egyptian Pound	0.2020	0.2150
Omani Riyal	1.7560	1.7820
UAE Dirham	0.1850	0.1872
Greek Drachma	0.3250	0.3510
Cypriot Pound	1.4300	1.4600

ISL Indices for Amman Financial Market

Index	26.12.92 Close	27.12.92 Close
All Share	171.38	172.55
Banking Sector	125.31	125.42
Insurance Sector	186.09	187.66
Industry Sector	231.47	234.31
Services Sector	246.37	246.67

Official seeks cross trading in Arab shares

MANAMA (R) — The new chairman of the Union of Arab Stock Exchanges wants member exchanges to allow their shares to be listed on other Arab markets, his office announced.

The Bahrain Stock Exchange said its director, Fawzi Behzad, would suggest this as part of a comprehensive plan to develop stock markets in Arab countries at the next board meeting of the Union of Arab Stock Exchanges.

Mr. Behzad was recently elected chairman of the union.

One of the key measures in his seven-point plan is to "arrange reciprocal agreements between Arab stock exchanges for cross listings of good companies listed on each stock exchange."

Trading on many Arab exchanges is now limited mainly to the citizens of the country or, unusually, to nationals of countries in a grouping like the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

Most shares in the Saudi market, for example, are available only to Saudis and not even to citizens of other GCC states — Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates.

Bahrain, which allows other GCC citizens to trade in local shares, broke ground under Mr. Behzad in 1990 by allowing investors from outside the Gulf to trade shares in Bahrain-based Arab Banking Corporation.

Mr. Behzad's plan for the Arab exchanges would also:

- Increase awareness of securities among Arab investors by developing instruments traded on their exchanges and promoting them to be accepted internationally
- Lay down uniform rules for trading and owning shares
- Establish links between brokers on the Arab exchanges to simplify placing orders and transferring money and certificates
- Adopt an arbitration system to settle disputes
- Distribute information about listed companies and price movements to the other exchanges
- Assist Arab countries without official stock exchanges to establish them.

B.P. says it could lose another 8,000 jobs over 3 years

LONDON (R) — Oil giant British Petroleum (B.P.) has said it expects to cut 5,000 jobs worldwide over the next three years and it forecasts a further 3,000 staff would leave its payroll by 1995 as a result of asset sales.

The 8,000 staff reduction target is in addition to the 11,500 job cuts announced by London-headquartered British Petroleum Co. PLC in August when it reported half-year results.

"There is no specific reason for the added job losses, except our determination to be more profitable," a B.P. spokesman said, stressing the numbers were still just targets.

"If we knew where the job losses were going to occur we would make a formal announcement," the spokesman said.

B.P.'s new target for job cuts surfaced in presentations to oil industry share analysts in New York and London recently.

The job cuts are expected to affect B.P.'s "downstream" non-production side including its chemicals, refining and marketing and corporate administrative staff.

At the end of 1991 B.P. employed 115,000 people worldwide.

The news of further job losses from B.P. comes after two oil companies warned of sharp falls in profits for 1992.

French oil firm Total S.A. said its 1992 net attributable profit could fall as much or more steeply than the 47 per cent drop seen in the first half.

Belgian oil company Petrofina S.A. said it too was expecting a big drop in profits as cash flow falls to keep up with spending.

All oil companies are being hurt by the sharp drop in oil prices and low demand as economic recovery remains sluggish in their major markets.

Egyptian pound slips from 18-month lock on dollar

CAIRO (R) — The Egyptian pound has been doing something strange in the past two weeks — fluctuating.

Its drop against the U.S. dollar is small but traders say they expect the movement to continue as the central bank loosens its purse strings and allows the pound to come under market pressure for the first time since flotation last year.

Spot rate pound transfers against the dollar closed Sunday at 3.330/345, down from 3.329/341 the previous week.

The rate was the lowest since the pound was floated at 3.311/337 on Oct. 8, 1991, but represented a drop of less than 0.4 per cent. The pound's high during that time was 3.297/308 in June this year.

Traders said the immediate downward pressure was due to a 40 per cent drop since October in receipts from tourists, a major source of foreign currency, and a spate of loans by public sector banks, largely to state firms.

Rumours that the central bank was about to devalue the pound also created downward pressure, traders said.

"The pound is under short-term pressure and long-term pressure from interest rates," said the chief dealer of one major bank, predicting a gradual decline to about 3,500 by the end of 1993.

Billions of dollars flooded into Egyptian pounds after Cairo freed interest rates last year. Egyptian pound interest rates topped 20 per cent and were

convertible back into a dollar which itself was yielding only a sickly four or five per cent.

But rates have dropped to about 16 per cent and the spread between short and long-term rates has narrowed, signalling a downward trend just as U.S. rates are perking up again.

Last week's issue of treasury bills attracted offers of between 16.0 and 16.6 per cent for 91 days while the 364-day bill stood at between 16.4 and 17.3 per cent.

Another banker said he expected a quicker decline against the dollar, perhaps to 3,500 by the end of March, as the dollar picked up against other currencies and the speculative flow into Egyptian pounds was stemmed by interest rate drops.

The significance of last week's decline, bankers said, was not its size but the signal from the central bank that it would not lock the pound into a virtually static rate against the dollar even though it had the reserves to do so.

The bank has built up record reserves of \$13 billion since last year.

The pound has stayed rock solid against the dollar since Egypt signed an economic reform programme with the International Monetary Fund in May last year.

As well as inflows from savings abroad, imports dropped as the government cut subsidies on many items, and receipts from tourism and the Suez Canal all rose more than expected.

Bulgarian central bank raises key interest rate

SOFIA (R) — Bulgaria is raising its key interest rate as the country's continuing political crisis is threatening the economy, the central bank said Monday.

The Lombard lending rate will rise to 47 per cent on Jan. 1 from 41 per cent, the National Bank of Bulgaria said.

"Political instability, a forecast inflation rise and the lack of an approved 1993 budget law called for the increase in the main interest rate," National Bank of Bulgaria Governor Todor Valchev told reporters.

"The fragile financial stabilization achieved by the country's last two governments risks failure if the real economy does not begin to support it," he said.

Bulgaria's first non-communist government since World War II, which launched radical economic reforms in 1992, lost a parliamentary confidence vote two months ago.

Attempts to form a government since then, by both the anti-communist Union of Democratic Forces and the ex-communist Socialist Party, have failed to win parliamentary support.

The third party in parliament, representing the ethnic Turkish minority, has now nominated presidential economic adviser Lyuben Berov to try to form an administration.

Mr. Berov, who is not a Turk, is expected to name his proposed cabinet Wednesday.

Economic reform has slowed, although parliament has adopted laws on privatisation and agrarian reform.

State-owned enterprises are not producing, but continuing to pay wages, and new tax laws need to be passed — so the budget deficit is growing.

The Lombard rate, with which the central bank steers the overall interest rate structure, has been cut three times this year to ease pressure on the economy. It was hiked to 54 per cent in 1991 to defend the lev currency.

"Our policy aims to prevent hyper-inflation," Lyubomir Filipov, head of lev operations at the National Bank of Bulgaria told Reuters.

Mr. Filipov said underlying inflation for January and February 1993 was expected to run at 70 to 80 per cent year-on-year.

With electricity charges due to rise 20 per cent on Jan. 1, Bulgaria's National Institute of Statistics has forecast monthly inflation will accelerate to 13 per cent in the first two months of 1993 from 6.7 per cent in November.

Year-on-year inflation is now 90 per cent, according to the Economic Planning Agency, compared with the finance ministry's forecast of 65 per cent made at the beginning of this year.

Iraqi dinar tumbles, prices soar

BAGHDAD (R) — The plunging Iraqi dinar and soaring commodities prices appear to have dashed hopes that the government's ban on luxury imports would stabilise the economy.

The U.S. dollar traded at about 36 dinars Monday at Baghdad's thriving black market. It fetched 27 dinars two weeks ago. The official rate is \$3.2 to one dinar.

Prices of essential commodities — potatoes, chicken, meat, flour and rice — have risen by up to 50 per cent.

Both trends are contrary to government expectations. Its measures to ban trade in luxury goods have done nothing to prop up the dinar and lower rates of essential food stuffs.

President Saddam Hussein ordered an increase of up to 40 per cent in civil service and army salaries last week. But the raise will do little to alleviate the sufferings of hard-hit Iraqis if the government does not check the price hikes.

With its oil exports choked off and billions of dollars of assets either frozen or confiscated, Iraq finds it extremely hard to redress its war and sanctions-torn economy.

Babel newspaper, owned by President Saddam's eldest son Uday, blamed the cabinet's economic committee for the soaring prices.

It said potatoes had chicken rose 50 per cent in one week and a 30-kilogramme sack of flour jumped to 700 dinars from 500 in the same period. Most essential commodities are now out of reach for many Iraqis.

Trade Minister Mohammad Mehdi Saleh blamed Saudi Arabia and Kuwait for the price rises.

In an interview to be published in the government newspaper Al Jumhuriyah Tuesday, Mr. Saleh said "the rulers of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait smuggle sheep and food out of Iraq, paying exorbitant prices, and then set the food on fire once they enter their borders."

He said the two countries bought food ordered from abroad by Iraq at double the price "to deny the Iraqi people their food."

There was no independent confirmation of Mr. Saleh's accusation but prices in Iraq are cheaper than in neighbouring countries for those with foreign currency thanks to the free-falling dinar.

Drastic government measures to support the dinar and reduce prices have all but failed. Last July, authorities executed 42 traders accused of illegal hoarding and profiteering.

In August, the government banned trade in luxury goods and compelled traders and retailers to clear them from their shops by Dec. 10.

A rationing system, which provides almost two thirds of food needs, has so far kept millions of Iraqis at subsistence level.

Mr. Saleh promised in the interview to add lentils to the rationing card during the holy month of Ramadan. Iraqis break their dawn to dusk Ramadan fast with lentil soup.

He also said he was trying to add "meat, chicken, potatoes and onions" to the rationing card.

Despite the bleak situation, President Saddam told Iraqis Monday the future was bright.

"My ambition is for every Iraqi family to have a house and a private car. And that will be possible," God willing," Baghdad newspaper quoted President Saddam as saying.

Lagos links oil contracts to investment

LAGOS (R) — Nigeria has urged companies contracting for its oil to heed a call for investment in its ailing economy or face possible termination of their contracts.

Oil Minister Chu Okegwara said a three-month notice for compliance with guidelines expired in November but that a further two months had been granted.

"It is my intention to select a small group of major players in the industry and serious enterprises who are willing to make significant real investment in Nigeria," he told officials of companies working in Nigeria, including subsidiaries of the Royal Dutch Shell Group, France's Elf and Chevron of the United States.

Nigeria is seeking investment mainly in oil exploration, infrastructure and heavy industrial projects.

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Croat president warns Bosnia war could threaten world peace

GENEVA (R) — Croatian President Franjo Tudjman warned Monday that the war in Bosnia could spill over and threaten world peace unless a rapid political solution was found.

Speaking at the peace negotiations in Geneva, Mr. Tudjman said enforcement of a United Nations no-fly zone and humanitarian aid were only secondary to the conclusion of a political settlement.

"We believe that peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina is something that cannot be postponed," Mr. Tudjman told a news conference before a meeting with U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali.

Mr. Tudjman said there were worrying signs that forces controlled by the Muslim-led government were getting increased backing from Islamic allies and that conservative Russian forces were mobilising support for the Serbs.

"Therefore, there is a realistic danger that this war might spill over and assume an undesirable scale that could threaten global peace," he said.

Earlier the Croatian president held talks with Dobrica Cosic, federal president of the rump Yugoslavia, about achieving a ceasefire and settlement in Bosnia and normalising relations between the two countries.

But although he said Mr. Cosic had supported normal ties with Croatia, Mr. Tudjman did not expect diplomatic relations to be agreed "either this or next week."

After meeting Dr. Ghali — who was holding separate meetings with Mr. Cosic and Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic — Mr. Tudjman was due to resume negotiations with Mr. Izetbegovic to hammer out a joint plan for the future structure of Bosnia.

The negotiations between the Muslims and Croats, which began

Sunday under the guidance of international mediators Cyrus Vance and Lord Owen, have centred on maps showing the provincial structure of a future Bosnia.

Mr. Vance and Lord Owen, co-chairmen of the Geneva conference on former Yugoslavia, have not produced any map themselves, but have issued a draft constitution for Bosnia laying down the basic framework they seek.

Under their draft, Bosnia would be a loosely-decentralised state of seven to 10 autonomous regions — a notion accepted only by the Muslims.

When the three factions first presented their maps to the conference earlier this month, only that produced by the Muslim-led government followed the mediators' stated wish that Bosnia should not be carved up along crude ethnic lines.

The Serbs, who have overrun two thirds of the republic, produced a map showing a "Serb republic" covering 60 per cent of the country and the rest left blank.

The Croats, led by Mate Boban, presented a map simply highlighting those areas where Croats were concentrated.

Diplomats say Mr. Vance and Lord Owen believe a common Muslim-Croat position could be vital to achieving a political settlement that would avert Western military action against the rebel Serbs.

But Bosnian Croat leader Boban, who is accompanying Mr. Tudjman in Geneva, contradicted a statement by the Croatian president Sunday that the two sides had already come "much closer" over the maps.

Mr. Boban told reporters the Croats still supported Bosnia as "a state of all three nations" — implying the ethnic division of the country — and said the map

currently proposed by the Muslims did not guarantee the rights of the Serbs.

"There is little chance to succeed but I would like it to succeed," Mr. Boban said.

"I hope we will find a satisfactory joint map. I think in this map the rights of the Serbian people should be recognised," he added.

Lord Owen said Monday he was entering the next round of talks on the crisis in former Yugoslavia with "glimmer of light."

He was speaking after progress was reported in Sunday's resumed Bosnian peace talks in Geneva.

Lord Owen told BBC Radio: "You have to hold together some degree of optimism and coherence and make people believe in the process of negotiation."

The former British Foreign Secretary said he was going into Monday's round of negotiations "with a glimmer of light," adding: "You can say that I have to do as a negotiator, but I want less talk of war and more talk of negotiations because that is the only real avenue for success."

Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic said in a letter to British Prime Minister John Major Monday that U.N. monitors could accompany any emergency flight over Bosnia to verify it was not on a combat mission.

Mr. Karadzic said he wanted "to cool the temperature over the issue of no-fly zones," and "clarify the precise nature of the flights we are operating."

Western nations led by the United States have threatened to use force to ensure compliance with U.N. no-fly zone regulations over the former Yugoslav republic.

Mr. Karadzic said in his letter: "We are not engaged in any aerial combat missions and... the flights we are operating are used

for humanitarian purposes only."

In order to verify this, he added: "I propose that monitors be specifically allocated to each aircraft, that they have full access to these aircraft."

He added that such access would be unrestricted, on a 24-hour basis, and no Bosnian Serb flight would depart without a U.N. monitor on board.

A spokesman for Major's Downing Street office declined to comment on the proposal, saying the whole issue of the enforcement of the no-fly zone was still under discussion.

Meanwhile the first serious snow of winter blanketed Sarajevo and large areas of Bosnia Monday, giving its beleaguered civilians a foretaste of the suffering they face.

But as the Bosnian capital neared nine months under siege and endured a lack of running water, electric power, telephones and adequate food, there were indications that government forces were fighting back with increasing success against the rebel Serbs.

A British spokesman in Vitez said intelligence sources in central Bosnia spoke of a major push by the Muslims and Croats in the past two weeks which had forced the Serbs back by up to 20 kilometres.

The push began near the mountain village of Varalici and had pressed north almost to the road linking the towns of Zepce and Banovici.

"There has been quite a lot of fighting and considerable progress has been made by the Bosnians into Serb salients. We are looking with interest at developments," said British spokesman Captain Lee Smart.

The road was still in Serb hands, he said, but was no longer secure, with government forces in places only two kilometres from it.

Gorbachev: Soviet breakup was a 'tragic mistake'

MOSCOW (AP) — Former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev said Sunday that the disintegration of the Soviet Union was a "tragic mistake" and defended Russia's hardline congress as setting the right course for the country.

"I think it was not necessary," Mr. Gorbachev said of the Soviet Channel One television.

"I had very bad consequences for the whole country, for all of the republics. I have thought and I still think that it was a tragic mistake. We will face the consequences of it for a long, long time," Mr. Gorbachev said.

Mr. Gorbachev denied accusations that he left behind a legacy of crumbling economy and ethnic conflicts, blaming his successors for the trouble.

"There have been promises that the Commonwealth (of Independent States) will give us the possibility to resolve all the problems," he said. But its problems "were not only left unresolved but became even more acute."

Mr. Gorbachev, 61, resigned on Dec. 25, 1991, following the collapse of seven decades of central Kremlin authority. The Soviet Union's demise was brought about by many of the political reforms that Mr. Gorbachev himself unleashed after coming to power in 1985.

Mr. Gorbachev remains popular abroad but is widely criticised at home, with the hardliners blaming him for the collapse of the Soviet system. Liberal critics say he had failed to address pressing political and economic issues, only making the current free-market reform harder to achieve.

But Mr. Gorbachev defended his tactics of limited reforms, saying:

"What is happening now in Russia and the Commonwealth countries proves that our line, that tactics that we adhered to, were necessary."

"Whatever began in 1985 is continuing," he added. "Do you think that the Gorbachev epoch is over? No, it was only the dawn, not even midday. We would not have today without what was started in 1985."

Mr. Gorbachev accused his political rival, Russian President Boris Yeltsin, of losing control over himself at this month's Congress of People's Deputies.

Russia's highest legislative body, dominated by former Communists, forced Mr. Yeltsin to accept painful compromises and abandon his reformist Acting Prime Minister Yegor Gaidar, the architect of economic reforms. Mr. Gaidar was replaced by Viktor Chernomyrdin, a conservative industrial manager.

Mr. Gorbachev said the con-



Mikhail Gorbachev

gress offered the welcome centrist alternative to impulsive Yeltsin and the radicals on both sides.

"I think the congress has provided a chance," he said. "People who try to portray it as a congress of retrogrades are unscrupulous and dishonest."

"At the crucial moment, when the President (Yeltsin) lost his nerve, it was the congress which demonstrated self-possession and the understanding of its responsibility," Mr. Gorbachev said.

Because of persistent attacks by Mr. Gorbachev in 1992, Mr. Yeltsin has stripped Mr. Gorbachev of various privileges, including a country house, lavish apartment, limousine and much of the property that forms his Gorbachev Foundation, a political think tank.

Seoul to seek help on nuclear impasse

SEOUL (R) — South Korean President-elect Kim Young-Sam said Monday he would ask the United Nations to help break a deadlock with North Korea over mutual inspections of nuclear sites.

"When the new government is formed, I plan to officially address this (nuclear) issue not only to the four powerful neighbours (the United States, Russia, China and Japan) but also to the United Nations Security Council," Mr. Kim told a breakfast

meeting of Christian leaders.

"No confidence can be built between South and North Korea without the implementation of mutual nuclear inspections."

A thaw in North-South relations has halted over the vexed question of nuclear inspections.

South Korea and its allies suspect Pyongyang is secretly developing atomic weapons, a charge the North denies.

North Korea argues it met the South's demands for inspections when it let in experts from the

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) this year.

South Korea and its allies, mindful of shortcomings in the Vienna-based IAEA's powers and its failure to identify all of Iraq's nuclear facilities, want to implement a system of short-notice inspections.

The North is willing to open up one facility, in Yongbyon some 95 kilometres north of Pyongyang, but has refused to allow the South Koreans access to its military sites.

Commission condemns ANC, Inkatha

JOHANNESBURG (R) — South Africa's Goldstone Commission Monday blamed rivalry between the African National Congress (ANC) and the Zulu-based Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) for violence and intimidation in the country.

It accused the leaders of both Nelson Mandela's ANC and the IFP, headed by Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi, of not doing enough to stop violence and impose discipline among members.

It said leaders of the two parties also continued to attack the other side in clear breach of a national peace accord. It suggested those guilty of such conduct should be barred from public appearances for a specified period.

The commission said in its third interim report to President F.W. de Klerk it was premature to comment on the role of members of the South African Defence Force in the violence.

"Whatever that role, it remains clear that a primary trigger of current violence and intimidation

remains the rivalry between, and the fight for territory and the control thereof, by the Inkatha Freedom Party and the African National Congress," it said.

The government set up the commission under Judge Richard Goldstone in 1991 to investigate the causes of political violence, a major obstacle in South Africa's transition to non-racial democracy.

More than 3,000 people have died this year in political violence, primarily in the Johannesburg area and Natal province.

ANC and IFP officials are due to meet Tuesday for a second session aimed at arranging a peace summit between Mr. Mandela and Mr. Buthelezi, who recently unveiled a constitution for an autonomous state within South Africa comprising Natal and the KwaZulu tribal homeland.

Judge Goldstone said other contributory factors to violence were socio-economic problems, antagonism towards the security forces by large numbers of black and white South Africans, and

the availability of weapons and explosives.

The report said both the ANC and IFP had been too hasty in accusing the other of causing violence.

"Each has been tardy, especially at the level of top leadership, in taking adequate and effective steps to stop the violence by imposing discipline and accountability among its members," it said.

It added that the longer a political settlement for South Africa was delayed, the worse the economy would become, contributing to escalating violence.

The report called for freedom of political activity for both the ANC and IFP.

It also said the police image could be improved through the posting of international police observers among both the South African and the KwaZulu police.

"An adequate, well-known and trusted witness protection programme would encourage witnesses to report information to the police," it added.

Hindus, Muslims flay move to find court solution to Indian shrine

NEW DELHI (AP) — Hindus and Muslims Monday lambasted a government proposal to resolve the 40-year-old dispute over a holy site where Hindu militants destroyed a 16th century mosque earlier this month.

Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao's cabinet decided Sunday to build a temple, and a mosque near the disputed site in the northern town of Ayodhya,

and to let the Supreme Court rule on which one should be allocated the holy ground.

The question will hinge on the court's ruling on whether Mogul invaders tore down a Hindu temple more than 400 years ago to build the Babri Mosque. Many Hindus believe the spot is where the warrior-god Rama was born.

Hindu extremists tore down the mosque on Dec. 6, setting off nationwide Hindu-Muslim riots in which more than 1,200 people were killed.

In a related development, police fired tear gas to disperse activists of the right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party who hurled rocks at buses and tried to break into the offices of the state-run television to protest what they called partisan coverage of the conflict.

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Effort for D.C. statehood faces defeat again

WASHINGTON (AP) — Boosters of statehood for the nation's capital have a friend headed for the White House, but ebbing support in Congress could wash away their hopes.

And while Bill Clinton the candidate said he would like to see statehood for the district of Columbia in his first term, President-elect Bill Clinton appears unwilling to spend much political capital to make it happen.

"Congress would have to act, but I believe in it... and I assume a bill will be introduced and I expect to support it," Mr. Clinton told reporters recently.

The biggest issue of all — whether the constitution would have to be amended for D.C. statehood — is far from resolved.

The constitution gives Congress the right "to exercise exclusive legislation in all cases whatsoever" for the nation's capital.

Statehood supporters say that means Congress can erect any form of government it wants, including a state, but every attorney general since Robert F. Kennedy, as well as several legal scholars who support statehood, maintain the constitution must be changed.

157,000 people, over the past 20 years.

Meanwhile, Mr. Clinton's support for statehood, in contrast to opposition from both President George Bush and Ronald Reagan, has intensified Republican antipathy.

"We Republicans view it as really a method by which the Democratic Party gets two automatic senators in perpetuity," said House Republican leader Robert Michel.

"We're on the margin right now. So I don't see how we Republicans, except maybe a few, would be amenable to statehood for the District of Columbia."

"New Columbia" statehood bills have been introduced in every Congress since 1987, but support in the House and Senate has never approached a majority.

The House District of Columbia Committee approved the bill in April on a 7-4 party-line vote. But fearing an embarrassing defeat, backers abandoned any effort to bring it to the full House.

Republicans say only one-third of the 435 House members favoured it last year. Democrats contend there may have been as many as 175 backers at one point, but acknowledge that may have slipped to 150.

Nonetheless, Eleanor Holmes Norton, the district's non-voting delegate in the House, plans to reintroduce it as HR51 — for 51st state — when the 103rd Congress convenes on Jan. 5.

Ms. Norton has no illusions about it passing, or even action being taken by the full House in 1993, particularly with 10 more Republicans in the House than a year ago.

Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, D-Mass., plans to reintroduce a companion measure in the Senate, but he has never mustered firm support from more than 31 of the Senate's 100 members.

Residents of the federal city have long chafed at being victims of taxation without voting representation in Congress, but efforts to change that situation have always fallen short.

Colu 1811

Chinese man 'quake' cause tremors, no d

HONG KONG (A) — A Chinese man felt slight tremors emanated from the "earthquake" in 1990 to level a small mound of an airport expansion. There were no reports of injuries from it, which measured 3.4 on the Richter scale.

Mr. Scale, said Steph, scientific officer at F. Royal Observatory, was no; confirm Chinese authorities tremors were caused by a small explosion of 1.12 dynamite to clear the But the Royal Observatory recorded tremors this consistent with the slight blasting works at Wai Tsai, lasting less than a minute.

A resident of Portuguese colony of the water in my tea a little bit" and that slight vibrations. "The radio station it had happened. The thing," the resident British colony of Hong people walking in the central and Wanchai reported feeling any the din of jackhammer construction work.

Bakker release from prison to visit father

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Former televangelist was allowed to leave a prison briefly Sunday to visit his father, who was in Charlotte with pelvic. Rev. Bakker, 57, was released from Federal Medical Center, Rochester, Minn., with his father, Raleigh, who was in the hospital.

Rev. Bakker's 66-year-old father was in a car "He's doing reasonably given his age the d treating his injuries at Mr. Toms said.

Thieves find jackpot in gamblers' car

HONG KONG (R) — stole cash and jewelry one million Hong K\$ from a car belonging to a tycoon, police said. A BMW disappeared a parked in the British central district by a Stanley Ho, an operator in the nearby I administered territory. She had left the car for during a night out, locers said. Police recovered hours later but the reported that a necklace and rings worth Hong K\$ 900,000 (\$115,000) and a watch worth Hong K\$ 100,000 (\$12,500) were missing. Police were investigating.

Road kill yield 'extinct' species

ADELAIDE, Austral. — A brown snake's last, become a posthumous contents of the stomach, which met an end under a car, reveal my blue tongue lizard in as last seen in 1955.

herpetologist Graham stumbled across the snake on a road near 10 kilometres north of Adelaide in October and managed to recover after slicing it open. Scientists subsided the specimen.

Mr. Collier's Adelaide Zoo as part of a programme. Mr. Collier, curator of reptiles and South Australia's Museum, said the reptile belongs to the tongue lizard group, which includes the common blue-tongued lizard and the sleepy lizard.

road-side fixtures to across Australia in sun pygmy blue tongue lizard just 16 centimetres when fully grown, the as its relatives are at a spot where the lizard thriving is being kept in a terrarium. The road where thousands have driven in the decades.

election of and Hinoud

Khmer Rouge rejects U.N. checkpoints

BANGKOK (R) — Khmer Rouge President Khieu Samphan said Monday his guerrillas would not allow U.N. peacekeepers to set up checkpoints in parts of Cambodia under their control when sanctions against the faction begin Friday.

Khieu Samphan, speaking to reporters after a meeting in Bangkok with Thai Foreign Minister Prasong Soonsiri, implicitly threatened any peacekeepers who tried to enter its zones.

The U.N. Security Council voted in November to impose sanctions on log exports to Thailand from Khmer Rouge zones and oil imports because of the faction's refusal to honour the Paris peace accord signed in October 1991 to end 13 years of civil war.

The Khmer Rouge, alone of the four factions, has refused to disarm or allow troops of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) free access.

Khieu Samphan reiterated the Khmer Rouge position that it would not comply with the accord until the Supreme National Council (SNC), the all-faction reconciliation body, was given more power and Vietnamese troops left Cambodia.

"Why sanctions against only us," Khieu Samphan said.

"If the Party of Democratic Kampuchea (Khmer Rouge) is going to allow checkpoints, the SNC must play its role as the unique and legitimate source of Cambodia... and be in a position to cooperate with UNTAC to provide and control implementation of the Paris peace accord, mainly to supervise and control withdrawal of foreign forces."

UNTAC officials say they have no evidence that any units of the Vietnamese force which occupied Cambodia from 1979 to 1989 remain there. They say the Khmer Rouge are twisting their interpretation of the accord to suit their own designs.

Asked if the Khmer Rouge would seize peacekeepers who tried to enter its zones, Khieu Samphan said: "You all know our position quite clearly."

The Khmer Rouge have kidnapped U.N. personnel four times this month and pledged to do so again to any "blue beret" found in its zones without its permission.

Its fighters have also fired on U.N. helicopters, and guerrilla artillery fire is creeping closer to U.N. positions in northwestern Siem Reap province.

Mr. Prasong told reporters he was not optimistic the impasse could be overcome soon.



Two Armenian fighters bundled against the cold look towards Azeri positions near the town of Lachin inside the disputed Armenian enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh (AFP photo)

Top Azeri official in Iran; karabakh on talks agenda

NICOSIA (R) — Azerbaijan's vice-president arrived in Tehran Monday, hot on the heels of his Armenian counterpart, as a Tehran newspaper said Iran should resume mediation between the two warring former Soviet republics.

Panah Husseinov told Iranian News Agency (IRNA) on arrival that the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute — the core of an undeclared war which has killed at least 2,500 Azerbaijanis and Armenians in the past five years — would be on the agenda during his two-day talks in Tehran.

Last week President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani pressed Iran's demand for a peaceful solution to the conflict on visiting Armenian Vice-President Gagik Artinyan, saying the fighting was "futile and detrimental to both the Armenian and Azeri nations."

The Tehran Times, considered close to the Foreign Ministry, said Iran should resume its mediation effort to end the "destructive" war.

The English-language newspaper, quoted by IRNA, said neither side paid "due consideration and understanding" to Iran's mediation earlier this year, but Tehran's goodwill was proven to both sides and it had to resume its peacemaking role.

Azeri and Armenian leaders signed a peace pact at a meeting with Rafsanjani in May, but it was swept aside by renewed fighting over Nagorno-Karabakh, an enclave inside Azerbaijan populated by Armenians but administered by Baku since 1923.

In the latest fighting, Azerbaijan's Defence Ministry said that up to 170 Armenians were killed or wounded in border clashes last week.

Russian troops in Tajikistan kill 6 Afghans

MOSCOW (R) — Russian border troops killed six Afghans and took one prisoner after a group of 20 armed Afghans tried to force their way across the border into Tajikistan, a Russian military spokesman said Monday.

"Six Afghans were killed and one taken prisoner. The others returned to Afghanistan," said Moscow-based spokesman Colonel Evgeny Znamensky.

None of the Russian servicemen involved in the "armed attack" were injured, he said.

He could not say which side opened fire first, but noted that border guards had orders to shoot only when attacked.

Mr. Znamensky said up to 80,000 Tajik refugees fleeing a simmering civil war in the impoverished former Soviet republic were massed near Fyany on the Afghan border where the incident took place.

Hundreds of people have been killed in months of fighting in the Central Asian state, which also borders China and Uzbekistan.

"The civil war has practically ruined Tajikistan's economy and thrown the country back 10 or 15 years," ITAR-TASS News Agency quoted Economics Minister Iamol Davlatov as saying.

He told a meeting in the capital Dushanbe that 80,000 people, mostly highly qualified workers, had fled Tajikistan since the fighting started.

WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

Poll finds gloom on Japanese-U.S. ties

TOKYO (R) — A record percentage of Japanese and Americans think ties between their nations are in trouble, according to a survey conducted jointly by the daily Asahi Shimbun and the Harris Organisation of the United States. Forty-seven per cent of respondents in Japan and 59 per cent in the United States rated ties as either "poor" or "bad," the Asahi reported Monday. Both figures were record highs for the U.S.-Japanese poll, conducted every year for past 10 years. Last year the negative figures stood at 37 per cent in Japan and 38 per cent in the United States.

Japan Communists expel 100-year-old leader

TOKYO (R) — The Japanese Communist Party (JCP) has expelled its 100-year-old co-founder for betraying a comrade who was shot in Moscow in 1939 after being accused of spying for Tokyo. The party newspaper Akahata Monday said the Central Committee decided at the weekend to expel Sanzo Nosaka after hearing the report of a fact-finding mission sent to Russia last week. The affair centred on the fate of Kenzo Yamamoto who worked in the Moscow centre of the Communist International, an arm of the Soviet Communist Party.